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*Four Discourses*  
*OF*  
*Simon Patrick. D.D.*  
The Bishop of *ELY*  
To his Clergy.

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Four Discourses  
Sent to the  
**C L E R G Y**  
O F T H E  
Diocese of *E L Y.*

O N  
Four Several Visitations.

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By <sup>*Patrick*</sup> ~~S Y M O N~~ <sup>*K*</sup> Lord Bishop  
of *E L Y.*

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L O N D O N :

Printed for *Ri. Chiswell*, at the Rose and  
Crown in *St. Paul's Church-yard.* 1704.

From Dickens

OF THE

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BY THE

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## The C O N T E N T S.

I. The Bishop of *Ely*'s Letter to his Clergy, before his Primary Visitation, 1692.

II. The Work of the Ministry.  
*On a Visitation*, 1698.

III. The Dignity of the Christian Priesthood.  
*On a Visitation*, 1701.

IV. An Exhortation to the Clergy : With a Discourse on *Rev. XVI. 9.* Latter part. Upon Occasion of the late Terrible Storm of Wind.  
*On a Visitation*, 1704.

20 MA 59

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L E T T E R  
O F T H E  
B I S H O P of *ELY*,  
T O  
H i s C L E R G Y.

*My Dear Brethren,*

**T**HAT the Visitation  
I shortly intend may  
be more easie to my  
self, and more profi-  
table to my Diocese, I have  
A 4 thought

thought fit to desire a few things of you before-hand.

I. It would be a good Preparation to the Enquiries I am then to make, if you would call your selves to an account, how you have performed the several parts of the Duty incumbent on you; and if you find you have been negligent, to resolve upon and immediately begin a sincere Reformation. I am not able to mention them all in a short Letter; but the very first thing in the *Book of Common-Prayer* deserves to be seriously considered; where you are enjoyned to say  
*daily*



*the Clergy of Ely.* 3

*daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly, &c.* It is possi-

ble I am sure to observe one part of this Injunction, if you cannot observe the other, that is,

Rubrick 2. 3.  
after the Pre-  
face concern-  
ing the Service  
of the Church,

if you cannot procure a Congregation to meet daily in the Church, yet you may, and therefore ought, to read the Service of the Church in your own Families, either *privately or openly, not being hindred by Sickness, or some other urgent Cause*, which cannot happen every day; this, if solemnly performed, would be a powerful Means to preserve an aw-

A 5

ful

ful Sense of God continually upon your Minds, and to make *your selves and your Families wholsome Examples to the Flock of Christ*, as you promised to endeavour at your *Ordination*.

Read over the Vows you then made, and the Charge which was then given you, and examine your selves faithfully how you have observed them, which would save me the labour either of mentioning all other Particulars of your Duty here, or making long Exhortations to you when I meet you at the Visitation, all being comprised in the Promises

*the Clergy of Ely.* 5

mises you made at that time,  
if they be distinctly ponder-  
ed.

If I had therefore but one  
Request to make to you, it  
should be this; that every  
Morning, the first thing you  
do, you would call to mind,  
that you are the Ministers of  
Jesus Christ; who have made  
such and such Promises to him,  
when you were admitted in-  
to his Service: which if you  
grant me, it could not fail to  
have a great Effect upon your  
Hearts and Lives. For how  
could any Man neglect to  
Preach the Word of God dili-  
gently, to Catechise the Chil-  
dren,

dren, Visit the Sick, Reconcile Differences, and all the rest, with due Care and Fidelity; when he had it always in his mind, that *this is his Business*, and that he promised to God before his People, that he would make this his Business, and conscientiously attend it? You cannot think of Appearing before our Lord and Master with any Confidence, if you have not made good your word to him.

II. I am loath to suppose, that any who have sworn Allegiance to their present Majesties, neglect to observe the  
*Month-*

*the Clergy of Ely.* 7

*Monthly Fasts* appointed by their Authority ; to implore God's Blessing upon their Persons , and the Prosperity of their Arms. But there being Reports, that some are guilty of such Scandalous Omissions in several Parts of this Kingdom ; I beseech you to take care, that there be no such Complaint made to me of any in my Diocese : And let me not find that any omit the Use of that *Form of Prayer*, which is enjoined on that Occasion : after which I will make a solemn Enquiry, and am commanded so to do.

MR. I

III. I hope you received, two Years ago, a *Letter of his Majesty's to the Bishop of London*, ordered to be communicated to both Provinces, of *Canterbury*, and *York*. Wherein he requires all the Bishops to keep a strict Watch over their Clergy; and more particularly, to order them to preach frequently against those Sins and Vices, which are most prevailing in this Realm: As namely, against *Blasphemy*, *Swearing and Cursing*; against *Perjury*; against *Drunkennes*; and against *Prophanation of the Lord's-Day*. And, in those  
Lord's

Lord's-Days, on which such Sermons are preached, to read also to the People such *Statutes* of this Realm, as are provided against that Vice, which is their Subject on that Day: Which *Statutes* were printed together with that *Letter*, and ordered to be transmitted to every Parish in both *Provinces*. I most earnestly intreat you to observe these Injunctions: for they were not intended for that Year only; but to continue till we saw the Blessed Effects of them in a hearty Reformation.

And



And for your better Direction in this matter, let me desire you to observe this Method. On the *Sunday Seven-night* before the Assizes, it will be most proper to read the Act of Parliament against PERJURY, and to preach upon that Subject. On the *Second Sunday in May* it will be Seasonable to read the Act for Observation of the LORD'S DAY, and exhort your Parishioners to the Religious Observation of it. On the *First Sunday in Advent*, read the Act against BLASPHEMY, *Swearing and Cursing*, and preach against those Sins. On the *Fourth*



*Fourth Sunday in Lent*, against the Sins of ADULTERY and FORNICATION. It hath been intended that *Homilies* be provided for all these Days; but till they be, let every one furnish himself with Sermons upon these Heads, and continue this Course from Year to Year.

IV. There have been such foul Practices, in *Clandestine Marriages*, that they produced lately a *Bill* in Parliament; which, if it had passed into an *Act*, would have fall'n very heavily upon us all, and  
cast

cast no small Reproach upon us, for standing in need of such severe Means for our Reformation. Which if we would avoid, let us observe the *Canons of the Church* exactly, and there will be no such Abuses to be Corrected by any Body, but our selves alone. I resolve, by God's Grace, to observe that Part of them which concerns me; by proceeding against him, as a Person Suspended for Three Years *ipso facto*, who shall offend against the LXII. Canon. I hope you will as carefully observe your Part; which is, (as you may there read) not to marry any Persons without *asking in the Church,*

*Church*, or such a *License* as the Law allows; and at no Hour, but between VIII. and XII. in the Forenoon; nor in any *Place*, but in the Church or Chappel where one of the Parties dwell; and not without Consent of *Parents* or *Guardians*, if the Parties to be married be under the Age of One and Twenty Years.

Let no Person, under the Colour of any *Peculiar Liberty* or *Privilege* belonging to the Church or Chappel, presume to do otherwise: for the Penalty of Suspension for *three* Years, will notwithstanding fall

fall upon him, as he may learn by the next Canon LXIII.; which I am resolved to see put in Execution.

V. And now let me prevail with you to take some Pains, where you find it necessary, with your *Churchwardens*, to convince them of the Obligation that is laid upon them, by a Solemn Oath, to make a faithful Answer to my Enquiries; which shall be as few as may be, that they may be the better able to give Satisfaction to every one of them.

It would be a great Comfort to me, as well as Credit to this Church, to find the usual Answer true: But pray them to consider what a Guilt they bring upon their Souls, if they say, *All things are well*, and as they ought to be; when they know in their Consciences, that many things are quite otherwise. Beseech them, as they love their own Souls, not to increase the Sins of the Nation when we are endeavouring to reform them.

VI. Particularly, press them earnestly, and assist them, to present to me all those, who profess to live in the Communion of our Church, and are of Age, and yet neglect to receive the Holy Communion, at least Three times in the Year, as by Law they are bound to do. For such People not only *wrong their own Souls*, as the Wise Man speaks, but bring a great Scandal upon our Church and Religion. For what other Christians are there in the World, who suffer their Members to live with

without any Solemn Regard  
to their Blessed Lord and Ma-  
ster, who died for them? As  
all those do, who never com-  
memorate his wonderful Love,  
by receiving the Holy Sacra-  
ment of his Body and Blood.  
For the Lord's Sake, let this  
gross Neglect be amended.

And let me prevail with you  
to put in practice the *first Ru-  
brick* before the Communion  
Office, which directs all those  
who intend to partake of the  
Holy Communion to *signifie*  
*their Names to the Curate, at*  
*least some time the day before,*  
that he may both know what  
quantity of Bread and Wine



is necessary to be provided for Communicants, and also discourse with those Young Persons who may need Instruction, and admonish those who are *notorious and open evil Livers*, or have any way injured their Neighbours, (as the *next Rubrick* directs) to abstain from the Lord's Table, till they have openly declared their sincere purpose of Amendment, and made Satisfaction for the Wrong they have done; this would be the more easie to perform, if as many as intend to Communicate would be persuaded, (as I hope without much difficulty they may) to come to the publick Prayers, which



*the Clergy of Ely.* 19

which I beseech you never fail to have in the Church on the *Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays* before the Communion, however you may want a Congregation at other times; and in great and Market Towns, if not in others, I hope you may be able to keep up *Monthly Communion*s, as well as Prayers on all *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*.

VII. There is another thing, in which both you and the Church wardens are concerned, of which I beseech you due Care may be taken, which is, to bring in to me, or to the Arch-

Arch-Deacon at his next Visitation, a *Terrier* of the *Glebe-Lands, Meadows, Gardens, Orchards*, and all other things belonging to your Parsonage or Vicaridge; with an Account of any *Customs of Tythings* which have been used among you, that so the Maintenance provided for God's Ministers by our Pious Ancestors may be preserved.

It is so great a Sin and Shame to let those Buildings which they erected for the Service of God, and for our Commodious Habitation, run to decay, that I must desire you likewise to inform me truly,

*the Clergy of Ely.* 21

whether both the Church  
and Chancel of your Parish,  
and also your own Houses  
and Out-Houses be in good re-  
pair: It makes my Heart ake,  
I assure you, to think that any  
of us should so far degenerate  
from our Worthy Progenitors,  
as not to uphold those Fabricks  
in a good Condition, which  
they raised from the Ground  
with great Cost and Char-  
ges.

Let us all endeavour to re-  
deem our selves from this In-  
famy.

It would be very useful also  
to have an Inventory under

B 2

your

your and the Church-Wardens Hands of all the Utenfils belonging to your Church, which I desire you to deliver unto me, or unto my Arch-Deacon at his next Visitation, to be kept in the Registers Office: Of this the Archbishop hath required me to take an Account.

VIII. And now let me beseech your Conscientious Care in some things which concern my self as well as you.

I. It is my Duty to *Confirm* such as are prepared for it, which that it may be done to Edification, and all Disorders  
and

and Crowds may then be avoided, I pray you to take notice, that I will Confirm none, but such whose Names shall be given to me in Writing by you the Ministers, of the several Parishes from whence they come, with a Certificate under your Hands that you have examined them, and find them not only able to repeat the Words of the *Church-Catechism*, but also sensible of the Solemn Vow which was made in their Names at their Baptism, and desirous to renew the same themselves: Let it be your Endeavour therefore to dispose the Young People of your Parish unto this, by re-

presenting to them the Necessi-  
ty and the Benefit thereof.

And for the better perform-  
ance of it, I design to Confirm  
as frequently as I am able, not  
only in my Visitation, (when  
we have so much other Busi-  
ness, that I desire those only  
who are near then to attend  
me) but, at other times, and  
in such Churches as I shall be  
advised to be most convenient,  
where those in the Neighbour-  
hood, who are fit to be Con-  
firmed, may be appointed to  
resort unto me.

**II. Giving Holy Orders** is another weighty Care of mine, about which I cannot be too solicitous, and wherein I must beg your Assistance. And first, I intreat you not to set your Hands to the Testimonial of any Person, but upon your own certain knowledge of his Life and Conversation for the space of three Years next before, as the XXXIV. Canon requires. It would much conduce to restrain Young Men from Vice, if they had no hope to gain a Testimonial of their good Life and Behaviour from the Easiness or Civility of their Neighbours, or any other Means,



Means, but meerly from their own known Virtue; make a Conscience of this, and it will go a great way to reform the Church. And *Secondly*, do not send any Person to me with an empty Title, for I will admit none to Orders upon a Curacy, unless it be a Competency, to be continued till he be otherwise provided for. And *lastly*, let me desire you to signify unto such as you find desirous to be put into Holy Orders, that I expect they come to me, or certifie me of their Intentions a Month at least before *Ordination Sunday*, that I may be able to give notice of it to the Parish or place where they



*the Clergy of Ely.* 27

they live, that if they have any  
impediment to object why they  
should not be admitted, I may  
have timely information of  
it.

*scripsit. 10. 11. 12.*

For there cannot be too much  
Care taken that the Flock of  
Christ be not committed into  
the Hands of bad Men, but  
such may be set over them as  
will watch for their Souls, and  
fleeing youthful Lusts will follow  
Righteousness, Faith, Charity,  
Peace, with them that out of a  
pure Heart call upon the Lord,  
XIII Heb. 17. 2 Tim. II. 22.

Unto whose Grace and Bless-  
ing I do most heartily com-  
mend

28 A Letter, &c.

commend you and your Labours.

April 20. 1692.

Symon Eliensfs.

20 MA 59

Unto whose Grace and Blessing I do most heartily commend



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THE  
WORK  
OF THE  
MINISTRY

Represented to

The CLERGY of  
the Diocese of *ELY*.

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By *STMON* Lord Bishop  
of *ELY*.

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L O N D O N,

Printed for R. Chiswel, at the Rose and  
Crown in *St. Paul's-Church-Yard*. 1698.

## ERRATA.

- P**Ag. 23. lin. 2. r. Temple, and to.  
p. 29. l. ult. r. though not in every.  
p. 34. l. 11. r. peculiarly.  
p. 46. l. 16. r. mere creature.  
p. 49. l. 24. r. teachest.  
p. 50. l. 21. r. Historia.  
p. 52. l. 13. r. ὁρθολογῶν.  
p. 56. l. 5. r. θεότης.  
p. 70. l. 17. r. celebrated.



The W O R K  
OF THE  
MINISTRY  
REPRESENTED  
To the CLERGY  
OF THE  
Diocese of E L Y.

Dear Brethren,

*T*O shorten my own Labour,  
and your attendance at my  
approaching Visitation, I  
send you this little Treatise be-  
forehand; which may serve in  
stead of the Exhortation, which  
is wont to be made on that oc-  
casion. You will read it, I hope

*with as serious consideration, as you would have heard it, had it been spoken, with due attention. By which means you will receive a greater benefit, than you could have done the other way: for you may read that often, and imprint it in your minds; which you could have heard but once, and might have slipt out of your memory.*

*You see by the Title of it, that it treats of the Duties which belong to that Function; in which it hath pleased the Most High, to do you the honour to employ you. A Function so truly noble, that it is not in my power to set forth the Dignity of it. For the Blessed Apostle St. Paul, thought it so great an honour to be made a Christian, that he thought no words,*



*the Ministry.* 3

words, too lofty, to express the dignity of their state: which he calls, not only our High Calling, III Philip. 14. but our Heavenly Calling in Christ Jesus, III Heb. 1. Which I cannot think of, but it makes me reflect; what an honour then it is, to be made a Minister of Jesus Christ, whose business it is, to bring others into this glorious state of Christianity; and to breed them up, & keep them in it.

What preferment is there comparable to this, to be constituted a Servant, and a Minister of the King of Glory; a Steward of the Heavenly Mysteries; an Ambassador for Christ; a Labourer in his Vineyard or Harvest; which implies indeed great pains, but carries in it also the great ho-

*nour of sowing the Seed of Eternal Life in Mens Souls; and cultivating, that is preparing and making them fit to be carried into Christ's Heavenly Kingdom? I do not name all the places in the Holy Writings, where you find your selves described under these Characters; because you cannot but be well acquainted with them. I shall only add, that we do not assume too much to our selves, when we call our selves the Clergy, i. e. God's Portion, or Inheritance; being peculiarly separated to his Service; as our Famous Mr. Mede hath most judiciously observed. Discourse XXXVI. p. 270. For the prime Ministers of our Lord Christ, are called by himself; The Angels of the Churches over which they presided,*

sided, I Revel. 20. And therefore St. Chrysostome in his third Book *περὶ ἱερωσύνης*, feared not to say, That the Priesthood is a Dignity raised far above all the honours of this World, and approaching to the Angelical Glory.

*Which if it be duly weighed, and laid to heart, we can never cease to give God thanks, who hath advanced us to such a noble Station; nor be unmindful of the service he expecteth from us: but both study all the duties belonging it; and endeavour to perform them with a Spirit suitable to our Function.*

*What those Duties are, it is the principal business of this small Treatise to lay before you. And with what Spirit they ought to be*

*performed, I shall, in the Conclusion of it, briefly admonish you. These Two will comprehend all that I have to recommend to your Consideration. For there is no necessity, sure, to prove, that they whom God hath set apart to himself, for a peculiar service, and therefore have a special relation to him, and have received a special favour from him; have a singular Obligation, to do all they can to express their gratitude to him; by discharging faithfully that great trust which he hath committed to them.*

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PART I.

**N**OW as to the Duties which are incumbent upon the Ministers of Christ, I shall *First* treat of those which are to be performed in *Private*; and then of those which are of *Publick* concernment.

SECT. I. The Private Duties, being to qualifie them for the right discharge of all Publick Offices, are principally, the *Study of the Holy Scriptures, and Prayer.*

We profess at our Ordination, that we are *Perswaded the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all Doctrine required of necessity for Everlasting Salvation, &c.* and we declare that we are determined out of the

*aid Scriptures to instruct the People committed to our charge, &c.* Which supposes that above all things we ought to apply our selves to the serious study of these Holy Books; that there we may learn, our own duty, and the duty of those whom we are to instruct in the Christian Religion. And accordingly a solemn Exhortation is made to those who are to be admitted to the Order of Priesthood; to consider how studious they ought to be in *reading, and weighing, and learning* the Scriptures; *that they may wax riper and stronger in their Ministry.* And more than this, we promise before God and his Church, that we will be diligent herein: which no Man can think of, if he have any Conscience, and live in the neglect of this Sacred Study. For after we have given our *Faith* to God and to his Church to be careful in this matter; we *Seal* it by receiving the Holy Communion  
of

of Christ's Body and Blood. Which one would think should be of mighty force ( and will be so if duly weighed ) to stir us up to this part of our duty ; that we may not be guilty of the breach of such solemn promises, as were made to God at his Altar.

And here it may be proper briefly to remember you that this is so conformable to the Doctrine and practise of the Ancient Church ; that *Theophylact* ( upon the X St. *John* I. &c. ) saith *the Scriptures are the door by which the true Pastor enters ;* and that he is a *Thief*, who comes not in by these, ἡ γὰρ χεῖρα τῆς γραφῆς μαρτυρεῖ, &c. for he doth not use the Scriptures as witnesses and vouchers for what he says. ' By these, saith he, we are ' brought to God : these will not ' permit Wolves to enter ; they ' keep out Hereticks, placing us ' in safety and security : These ' give us right notions of all things ' where



‘ wherein we desire to be informed.  
‘ ed.

And therefore, My Brethren, apply your selves devoutly to the Study of these *Divine Books*; or rather of these Books *which will make you Divine*. For so they were called in the Ancient Christian Language, *Deificos libros*, and *Deificas Scripturas*, and *Instrumenta Deifica* (as *Ælianus* Proconsul of *Africa* calls them in *Optatus* lib. 1.) Which Name the very Heathen had learnt, it was so common, as appears by the enquiries they made after Bibles to burn them: this being an usual question in the examination of the Martyrs, *Libros Deificos habetis?* Which we should look upon therefore, (as they did) as an invaluable Treasure: and let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom, as the Apostle *S. Paul* speaks III *Colossi*. 16. Such wisdom, as will not indeed make us Philosophers, or Rhetoricians,  
&c.



Ec. (to use the words of *Justin Martyr*) ἀλλὰ παιδεύουσα ποιεῖ τὰς θνητὰς ἀθανάτους, &c. But gives such instructions, that of Mortals it makes us immortal; of Men it makes us God-like; from the Earth it translates us above the top of Olympus. Exhort. 2. ad Græcos. p 40.

And the very same in effect the Holy Scriptures speak concerning themselves, when they tell us they are able to make such a Man as *Timothy* was, wise unto salvation; being profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Tim. III. 15, 16, 17. which should move us to follow his Exhortation in the foregoing Epistle, 1 Tim. IV. 13, 15. Give attendance to reading, &c. Meditate on these things, give your selves wholly to them, that your profiting may appear to all, or in all things.

For

For this end you must joyn with this, such other Studies, as tend to lead you into a right understanding of the Holy Scriptures: Of this you were admonished also at your Ordination; when you promised *to be diligent in reading the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the World and of the Flesh.* And chiefly you are to study to understand the Language, in which the Holy Scriptures were Originally delivered to the Church: especially the New Testament; in which we ought to be as perfect, as Lawyers are in *Littleton's Tenures*. For this is our standing Rule, of Faith, and Manners: in which if we be not well skilled our selves, we shall never be able to direct others. And next to this, it is necessary to study diligently some approved Commentator upon the Bible; especially *Dr. Hammond* on the New Testa-

ment: which is not only to be read over, but to be digested so that you may be Masters of the sense of our Saviour and his Holy Apostles. I shall not lanch out into any further directions about the study of the *Fathers*, and the Church-History, which are necessary to accomplish a compleat Divine: for that would swell this Book to a much greater bulk, than I design it should have.

To conclude this Section, let *Ezra* that Restorer of Religion among the Jews be your pattern: who tells us himself, that he was *a ready Scribe in the Law of Moses*, VII *Ezra* 6. Such we should be, well versed in the Holy Scriptures, especially in the *Laws of Christ*: so as to have them *ready* at hand for our purpose. And in the 10th Verse, he tells us how he came to deserve this Character. *First*, he had *prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD.* i. e. to

understand it : and then *Secondly*, it follows, he prepared his heart *to do it* : that is, to act according to his knowledg ; and so, *to teach Israel statutes and judgments.*

SECT. II. Which that we may be able to do with good success, we ought as the Psalmist speaks most emphatically, *give our selves unto prayer*, CXIX Psal. 4. This is a duty incumbent upon all private Christians, whom our Saviour and his Apostles command, *to pray alway*, and *to pray without ceasing*, and *to watch unto prayer* : but the Ministers of Christ ought more especially, to be instant and incessant in it ; because they have need of a special assistance and blessing from above, upon their labours to make others good Christians.

Which cannot be done without the blessed presence of God's Holy Spirit with us : which must  
con-

constantly and earnestly be implored ; to give us a right judgment in all things ; to fill us with a lively sence of Divine Matters, and to enable us to convey it into the Minds and Hearts of others.

Of this also we are put in mind at our Ordination ; and therefore should never forget it. For in that admirable Exhortation, which goes before the Questions to which we are to make Answers, the great excellence, and the great difficulty of our Office is represented to us ; to make us sensible *what need we have to pray earnestly for God's Holy Spirit :* without which it is impossible for us to have either a will or ability to perform it as we ought. And accordingly this is one of the things, which immediately after we promise to God and to his Church : That we will *be diligent in Prayers, as well as in reading the Holy Scriptures.* Let

Let us therefore, as it follows in the forenamed Exhortation, *Pray continually to God the Father, by the Mediation of our only Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly Assistance of the Holy Ghost.* For as the Holy Scriptures are *ὡς* the Door whereby the good Shepherd enters to the performance of his Office, as *Theophylact* I observed before Expounds our Saviour's words, *X John 1.* So the Holy Spirit of God, in the opinion of the same Father, is the *ὡς* mentioned in the third Verse of that Chapter, which we translate *the Porter, or the Door-keeper, who opens the Door for us; and lets us into the sense of the holy Scriptures.* So his words are; *because by the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures being opened and understood, Christ is made known to us; therefore it is called the Door-keeper.* *Εν ᾧ ὡς πνευματικὴ σοφία, &c.* By whom he being the Spirit of Wisdom and

*and Knowledge, the Scriptures are opened unto us: and by that means, our Lord the good Shepherd enters to take us into his care and conduct.*

To be Strangers then to this Holy Duty, is to be Strangers to God, and to all that is good: who as *He is nigh to all those that call upon him faithfully*; so he withdraws himself from those who neglect him. Of which we cannot be guilty, if we remember, in what need we stand above all other Men, of his blessed Presence with us, to guide, and strengthen, and further us in the discharge of our weighty trust for his Honour, and the Salvation of Men. This will stir us up not only to *ask*, and *seek*, but *knock* also (as our Saviour Speaks) that is pray with the greatest importunity for the Holy Spirit, which our Heavenly Father is more ready to give, than Parents are to give food to their hungry Children.

Let



Let us be awakened by the example of King *David*, who prevented the morning-light to pray to God, and to meditate in his Statutes, as he tells us, *CXIX Psal.* 147, 148. Though he was a man that had abundance of Cares upon him, and was engaged in many Warrs (as *Theodoret* glosses upon that place) yet God still was in all his thoughts; without whose aid he durst not undertake any thing, much less hope for success in his Affairs. And shall we who have no such load of business upon us, roll our selves up and down in ease, and (as that Father there speaks) *ὁ δὲ ἀρχαίως ἡμέρας*, &c. not so much as in the beginning of the day, offer up an hymn of Praise and Thanksgiving to the giver of all good things; and implore his Blessing upon us? A most stupid negligence; and an unpardonable insensibleness of our constant and most bountiful bene-



benefactor : *without whom we can do nothing.*

His Grace and Mercy we ought to seek as soon as we rise ; and as often, as we can in the day ; retiring our selves on purpose into our Closets, to beseech him to be with us in our Studies, and in our Labours for the good of Souls. For as *Clemens Alexandrinus* speaks (Lib. VII. Strom.) a Priest ought to be of such an heavenly Spirit, that, *Εὐχὴ μὲν αὐτῷ ὁ εἶς ὅλθ, καὶ ὁμιλία πρὸς Θεόν, his whole life is Prayer, and Conversation with God.* Which *St. Basil* (in his Homily upon the Martyr *Julitta*) thinks is the Apostles meaning, when he bids us, *Pray without ceasing* : not by putting up Petitions to Heaven perpetually, in so many words (for that's impossible) *ἀλλὰ προαιρέσει μάλλον ψυχῆς, &c.* but rather by the settled Disposition of our mind, and bent of our Wills towards God (into which our Prayers ought to put us and preserve us therein

therein) and by a regular Life: whereby we shall draw down still more of his Grace upon us.

For this I must observe in the Conclusion of this part of my Discourse; that careless and frigid Prayers, which make no alteration in our selves, have no effect with God. To whom we must address our selves with such fervent and earnest Desires, as turn our Hearts towards him; and give us such a lively sense of him, as brightens and cheers our minds, knits our Wills and Affections to him, and makes us like him. Thus *Daniel* represents this Duty to us, when he complains of the Children of *Israel*, that *They did not make their prayer to the LORD their God, to turn from their iniquity, and to understand the truth, IX. Dan. 13.* Which as it denotes their dull formality in their Prayers, (which no doubt they continually made in their Captivity) whereby they were  
not

not converted to God, and reformed in their lives : So it implies withal that serious and devout Prayer, hath a power in it to turn about the Heart, and give God the possession of it : which is the best way to *understand the truth.*

Employ therefore as much time as you can, in secret Prayer to God ; with such Affection, that you may feel your selves really bettered by it. Pray for your selves and pray for your Flock (that God would bleſs your Labours among them, and pour the Dew of his Heavenly Grace upon them) for the whole Church of Christ ; yea for all Mankind. For ſuch is the Nobleneſs of this Duty, that in the exerciſe of it, we extend our Charity to all the World, which we cannot do by any other means. It enlarges our Souls into a kind of infinity and immenſity in our good Deſires and Wiſhes ; and in the readineſs of our  
Mind

Mind to do good to every one, were it in our power.

SECT. III. Thus having briefly laid before you the *private* Duties intumbent on the Ministers of Christ, I proceed to those which are of a *publick* Concernment. And in treating of them, I shall take them into consideration, in that Order wherein they lie in the publick *Liturgy* of our Church.

Where the first thing that presents it self unto us, is the *Order for MORNING and EVENING Prayer, daily throughout the year.* Which is to be performed by him that *Ministret* in every *Parish-Church or Chappel, being at home, and not being otherwise reasonably bindred.* This is the standing Law of this Realm; and a most reasonable Law it is. For who can imagine, that God who so strictly enjoined the Jews, to  
offer

offer to him a Lamb every morning and every evening at the Temple, to double this Sacrifice on their Sabbath, doth not expect that we (who are made a *peculiar people* to him, by far greater benefits than were conferred on them) should offer unto him the Sacrifice of prayer, and praise and thanksgiving, Morning and Evening in our Churches? All Christians from the beginning ever did it. At this day all the Eastern Churches, both *Greek* and *Armenian* constantly do it. I need say nothing of the practise of the *Roman Church*; which in this matter is truly Catholick. The *Lutherans* and *Calvinists* (as they are called) in *Germany*, have their daily publick Offices; and full Congregations. The *Socinians* in *Poland*, as *Ruarus* tells us (*Cent. 2. Epist. pag. 99.*) had publick Prayers Morning and Evening, which lasted three Quarters of an Hour. Yea, the *Mabo-*

B

*metans*

*metans* themselves have their stated times of Prayer ; five times in the day. For *Mahomet* had so much sense, as to call Prayer, *The Pillar of Religion* (as *Dr. Pocock* observes upon *Abul-Pharagii*, p. 304.) For take this away, and Religion falls to the ground : as this Pillar of it will soon do, if it be not supported by publick Assemblies.

How they came to be so much disused among us, here in this Church, except only on *Sundays*, it is sad to consider, and extreamly to be lamented. We herein forsake the practise of all Churches ; and fall short of those who are not Christians. The Constitutions indeed of our Church, are conformable to all others ; and strictly enjoyn that which we do not now practise. Which is a publick Witness against us, that we are degenerated from our first Principles ; and by degrees grown cold and remiss in our Religion. The fault perhaps may have

have been very much in the People ; but it is to be feared we have been to blame also : in not admonishing them of their Duty, and calling upon them to assemble themselves daily to Worship their blessed Lord and Saviour.

It must be allowed, that in some Parishes, the Houses are so scattered, and lie so far distant from the Church, that they cannot possibly meet together daily for the Publick Service of God. But this Plea cannot, with any appearance of truth, be made for all Parishes ; especially for Market-Towns : where the Houses are built closer together, and not far from the place of publick Worship. Many are at leisure also in such Parishes, to attend daily, if they had Hearts to do it, upon the publick Prayers : Whatsoever may be alledged in the excuse of poor labouring People.

Therefore use your best endeavours to bring the People to a sense



of their Duty, in this matter ; and to the performance of it : where no tolerable reason can be given for the neglect of so necessary a part of our Religion ; and which tends so much to the honour of it, and to the Glory of God. To attempt such a good thing, though you should not succeed in it, will give you great satisfaction. But whosoever considers the Condition of the Cities of *London* and *Westminster*, as they were formerly, and as they are now, will not despair of Success. For before our unnatural Civil War, I have been informed by a Reverend Divine, there were few Churches in those Cities, where daily publick Prayers were read ; and where they were, very few People to joyn with the Minister in them. But now there are very few Churches that want them ; or a Congregation to attend them. And though such Assemblies were but thin, when this first begun, a  
little



little after the happy Restauration of our Monarchy and Church; yet I my self can witness, that their Numbers daily encreased: in so much that in some places there are publick Prayers four times a day, and good Congregations; where, in my Memory, there were none at all.

This is a great Encouragment to try what may be done in other great Towns; where People are not far distant from the Church.

Begin with perswasions to come, at least, upon *Litany* days: And so, by degrees, they may be induced to wait upon God constantly at his House, to make their Prayers and Acknowledgments to him. Represent to them frequently how much the publick Service of God, excels all that we can perform in Private: Because then God appears more glorious in Praises, when his People joyn together to set them forth. Bid them mark how *David*

and other inspired Persons, have, in the Book of *Psalms*, stirred up the Affections of the whole Body of God's People, to meet together for his Divine Service : saying, *O praise the LORD, all ye nations : praise him all ye people, CXVII. 1. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together, XXXIV. 3. Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of Saints, CXLIX. 1.* Or, as it is in the Hymn appointed every day, after the second Lesson at Morning Prayer, *C Psal. 4. O go your way into his Gates with thanksgiving, and into his Courts with praise : be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.* In short instruct them, that every *Hallelujah*, they meet withal in the Holy Scriptures, or, *Praise ye the LORD*, suppose publick Assemblies (to which all the foregoing Exhortation are directed) where many met together for Divine Worship : not  
con-

contenting themselves to praise God alone by themselves; but with all those who were Members of the same Body with them.

But if by all your endeavours you cannot bring this to pass, yet there is one thing of which I must admonish you, that I am sure is in your power. It is this, That all Priests and Deacons are bound by the Law of this Realm and of this Church, to say daily Morning and Evening Prayer *privately*, when they cannot *openly*: *Not being let by sickness, or some other urgent Cause.* See the first Rubrick in the Common-Prayer Book, after the Preface, *concerning the Service of the Church*: Do not fail therefore, I beseech you, to read the daily Prayers, Morning and Evening, *privately* in your own Family: That the Divine Service, according to Law, may be performed daily in every Parish, though not every

*Church.* There cannot be constantly nor commonly *urgent Causes*, much less *Sickness*, I hope, to hinder this : And when there is not, look upon your selves as bound in Conscience, to read the Prayers at home.

And when you do officiate Publickly on the Lord's Days, or other times, in the Church, let it be in such a solemn manner ; that it may move the People to attend, and make them in love with our Prayers. There is a careless, overly way of reading them, so fast, and with such little Devotion, as hath exceedingly disgraced them : and given great offence to the better sort of People among us, and hardned the bad in Prophaness and Irreligion. I hope none of you are guilty of this ; but it becomes me to admonish you of the danger of it, and to beseech you constantly to compose your selves with the greatest seriousness, and reverence, and affection,

affection, to perform Divine Service in the Church. This will keep up the Majesty of our Worship, and preserve it from Contempt. For I can see nothing that should move those that Dissent from us, to call it *dead* and *formal*, but only the *deadness* and *formality* that hath appeared too often in him that Officiates. Stir up yourselves therefore to Officiate in every part of the Divine Service, with a becoming Gravity and Deliberation; and yet with such Life and Affection, as may express your Concern to have your Petitions Granted, and the word of God Regarded.

*Avicenna* (as he is vulgarly called) an *Arabian* Philosopher, hath an excellent Discourse upon this Subject, in the third part of his *Metaphysicks*: Where having said that they who instruct the People, ought to teach them *Forms of Prayer*, wherein to address themselves

to God. He adds this Direction to them. *As a Man uses to prepare himself to come to the King, in purity and cleanness; with graceful Language, and an humble Gravity: with a comely Deportment of Body; ceasing from all disorderly Motions there, as well as from perturbation of mind: so it is fit there should be laudable Modes and Forms of serving God at all times. For these do highly conduce to imprint on the minds of the People a sense of the most high: and to confirm them in their Devotion to the Laws and Rules of Life. Which if they were not preserved by this solemn Commemoration; Men would quite forget in one or two Generations.* Thus I find him quoted by Mr. Selden in his *Comment. in Eutichii Origines*, fol. 57. And he doth but express the sense of the Ancient Christians; from whom the *Mahometans* derived that solemnity and seriousness which they use in their Divine Service.

It is no small part of the Study of Priests in the present *Roman* Church, to learn how to compose their Looks, and Gestures, and Voices; in the several Offices which they are to perform. Which as it hath too much of the *Theatre* in it, so that pains may all be spared, by possessing our Minds with a deep sense and feeling of the Majesty of God to whom we speak; and of our great need of the things which we pray him to bestow upon us. This will naturally compose our Countenances, and regulate the tone of our Voice, and make us pronounce the Prayers as gracefully, as we would a Petition to the greatest Majesty on Earth. The Organs of Speech indeed in several Men, are of a very different Frame and Figure; so that all cannot speak no more than sing alike: But some more harshly, some more sweetly. Yet an awful Sense of God upon our  
Minds,



Minds, and an hearty Love to him, would form every Man's Voice to as good an Accent, as his natural Capacity will permit.

SECT. IV. The next Office in our Liturgy, is *The Order for the Administration of the Holy Communion*; which being the highest Duty of our Religion, that which is most peculiar *Christian Worship*; the greatest Care ought to be taken about the due Performance of it. That is :

I. First of all you ought to invite your People to a frequent Participation of it. We are not told in Scripture how oft we are to do this in remembrance of our Saviour : But when we consider, that this is the end and intention of it, to Commemorate the wonderful Love of our Lord, in his Death and Passion for our sakes, we cannot think



think fit to let there be a long time between one communion and another. Especially when we consider that the first Christians, it is manifest, met together every *LORDS Day*, at least, to magnifie the mercy of God, in giving his only begotten Son to be our Redeemer; and the inconceivable love of the Son of God, in making himself an Offering for our Sins. This they thought their great business, when they assembled together; so that our Assemblies never look so like Christian Assemblies, as when the Holy Communion is celebrated.

2. In order to which frequently open to your People, the *Nature, Necessity*, and the great *Benefits* of communion with Christ, and one with another, in this Holy Sacrament of Christs Body and Blood. Answer their Scruples, and remove their Objections: but especially awaken them out of that

that lazy indifference wherein too many live; whether they live like Christians or no.

3. When the time is appointed for its Administration, warn them to prepare themselves for it; and direct them how to do it: and require them who intend to partake of it, to signify their Names to you, at least, sometime the day before. So the first *Rubrick* before the Order for Administring the Holy Communion, requires with great reason: because you ought to have time to do what follows.

4. If any Person in your Parish, be a notorious evil liver, or have done any wrong to his Neighbours, either by word or deed, so that the Congregation be thereby offended, you ought, having knowledge thereof, to admonish him (as the next *Rubrick* directs) to amend his naughty Life; and not presume to come to the  
Lord's

Lord's Table, till the Congregation be satisfied of his Repentance ; and that he hath made such a recompense to those he hath wrong'd, as they accept of. The like is to be done when you perceive Malice and Hatred to reign among any of your Parish : endeavouring to bring them to a reconciliation ; before you suffer them to partake of the Holy Communion.

5. And more than this, the *Third Rubrick* requires you, if these private endeavours have no effect, openly to repel such Persons from the Communion, if they offer themselves to receive it, who will not be reconciled, nor reformed : giving notice of their obstinacy to the *Ordinary*, within the time there prescribed.

6. In the Administration of the Holy Communion, compose yourselves, to the most serious and solemn deportment, and perform every part of this most Christian service,

service, with the highest degree of Devotion. So *St. Justin Martyr* tells us, in his *Second Apology* (where he gives an account of what was done in the Christian Assemblies in his time) that Bread, Wine and Water, being set before him that presided, *He sendeth up Prayers and Thanksgivings* ὁν δὲναμὺς αὐτῷ, *with all his Power, or Might.* Which is an expression that hath been much abused by those who separate from us, to prove that no forms of Prayer were used in the Church in those days: but he who officiated, conceived a Prayer of his own, *as well as he was able.* So they interpret that Phrase ὁν δὲναμὺς αὐτῷ: which is manifestly an expression of *that earnestness of Devotion* with which the Bishop or Priest came to Consecrate the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. It being a Phrase very much used among the Jews, when they speak  
of

of their Prayers ; For their Ancient Doctors, have this saying among them (as our excellent Mr. *Thorn-dike* observes) *Whosoever saith Amen WITH ALL HIS MIGHT*, the gate of the Garden of Eden is opened to him : And *Maimonides* describing their Morning Service useth the same form of Speech. The People answer, *Amen* : be his great name Blessed for ever and ever, *WITH ALL THEIR MIGHT* : See *Service of God at Religious Assemblies*, Chap. VII. To which may be added what we read in the *Apostolical Constitutions* ; where there is a large Form of Thanksgiving at the Eucharist, for all Gods Blessings ; Especially in our Lord Christ, from his Incarnation to his Sufferings, Death and Resurrection : And then it follows, *Therefore being mindful of these things, which he suffered for us, We give Thee thanks, O Almighty God,*  
*ὅτι ὅσον ὁφείλομεν ἀλλ' ὅσον δυνάμεθα,*  
*not*

*not so much as we ought, but as much as we are able.* Which exactly answers to the *ὅσον δύναμις* **ALL THE MIGHT** in *Justin Martyr*, and explains the meaning of it.

But there have been so many excellent Books written about the *Holy Communion*, that I will enlarge no further upon this Subject.

**SECT. V.** In that Office there is a *Rubrick* directing where the *Sermon* is to come in: and therefore I shall in the next place say something to you concerning *Preaching*. Which is a Duty to be performed by every Priest, according to the Authority given to him at his Ordination, in those words, *Take thou Authority to Preach the Word of God, and to Minister the Holy Sacraments, in the Congregation, where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto: And the Prayer made after the Ordaining of Priests,*

Priests, *That God's Word spoken by their mouths, may have such success, that it may never be spoken in vain.*

Now to make it thus successful a great many directions might be usefully given, concerning both the *Matter* of Sermons, and their *Form*; their *Stile* also, and manner of *Delivery*, with distinct *Pronunciation*, and such like: into which if I should launch out, they alone would be sufficient to fill a little Book. I shall therefore only briefly desire you to consider, the state and condition of your Auditory, and to suit your Discourses thereunto. Country People are not to be troubled with Controversies and Disputes; but to be plainly taught, what to believe and practice.

1. Therefore endeavour to instruct and settle their minds in the Principles of Religion. And for this end study well the Works  
of



of Two Late Bishops of *Chester*. One of which (Dr. *Wilkins*) hath wrote a Treatise of *Natural Religion*: and the other (Dr. *Pierſon*) hath given a full account of the *Chriſtian*, in his admirable Book upon the *Apoſtles Creed*.

2. Eſpecially inſtruct them in the great Fundamental Article of our Religion, the *Divinity* of our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour; and of the Holy Ghoſt: ſhowing them how all our comfort is built upon this. And truly I look upon it as a ſingular Providence of God, that he did not ſuffer thoſe Hereticks who now boldly ſtrike at this great Article of our Faith, to ſtart up in an ignorant Age; but in a time when there are ſo many able Men in the Church to beat them down. God hath furniſhed us with a great number of ſuch excellent Perſons, as have thoroughly ſtudied the Holy Scriptures, and the Ancient Doctors of the Church:



Church : And they who have not had opportunity to make such improvement in Divine Knowledge, may furnish themselves out of their Writings, which these Hereticks have occasioned. Particularly out of the Bishop of *Worcester's* Discourse about the *Blessed Trinity* ; which is not long, but very full and satisfactory.

3. Yet I must admonish you, when you find it necessary to discourse to your People upon this Subject, that you be mindful of His Majesties late *Injunctions* ; and not presume to invent any new ways of explaining so sublime a Mystery, as the *Holy Trinity*, or use any other terms to express it, but such as the Ancient Christians used, and are in the Articles of our Religion, the Three Creeds, and our Liturgy. Which teach us, that our Blessed Saviour is the *Son of God*, in the highest and most proper sense of these Words, by  
*Eternal*

*Eternal Generation.* In like manner we are to believe that the *Holy Ghost* is God, proceeding from the Father and the Son. This may be evidently proved out of the Scriptures, wherein God hath thus far revealed his own most Blessed Nature, as well as his Mind and Will unto us. But how the Son is *Begotten* of the Father, and *how* the Holy Ghost *proceeds* from both he hath not revealed unto us (because it is as *incomprehensible*, as the Divine Essence is) and therefore we must not adventure to say any thing about it. For though we know that *the Son is God*, and *the Holy Ghost is God*, and yet there are not *Three Gods*, but *one God in Three Persons* (because the Holy Scriptures plainly declare the Son to be a distinct Person from the Father, and the Holy Ghost from both) yet what it is that makes the distinction of the Person of the Son, from the Person of the Father,

Father, &c. that is not declared to us by God, who only knows it, and therefore is not to be enquired into. Accordingly the Holy Fathers of the Church frequently admonish us to forbear such enquiries, in that Memorable saying of theirs, τὸ πρὸς θεύῃ, ἐηλεῖν search not into the manner, *how* such things can be, but shun such enquiries. For the *manner* of the Sons Generation, and the Holy Ghosts Procession, can be comprehended by none but themselves.

But such things being let alone, as out of our reach, let it be your business to establish the People in this great Truth, that Jesus Christ is really *the Eternal Son of God, begotten of him before all Worlds*: By representing this to them as the great support of their Souls; which may safely rely upon one *so mighty to save*. For he who is perswaded that our Saviour, *is perfect God, as well*

well as perfect Man, can no more doubt of his Power to communicate all Divine Grace to us ; than he can doubt of the Vertue of his Sacrifice, to make satisfaction for our Sins, and work our Reconciliation with God : whereby whatsoever might hinder his Divine Communications to us, is taken out of the way. We are sure, if this be true, that he is an Everlasting Spring of Divine Grace, to the whole World ; would they but believe on him : Whereas it is inconceivable how any mere Creatures, should be so highly exalted, as to be possessed of Omnipotence and Omniscience ; that is to be able to know all our needs, as well as to supply them. Which it is easie for our Blessed Saviour to do, if he be the *Eternal Son of God* ; who hath taken out Nature into a personal Union with himself.

4. Which

4. Which great truth being firmly established in their belief, endeavour I beseech you to improve it all you are able, to the amendment of their lives. Such an amazing love of God, ought to have a mighty effect upon us all; and will make a great change in us, if it be heartily believed, and pressed home by serious consideration. Let that therefore be the great business of your Preaching, to reduce this and all other Christian Truths, to Christian Practice. Make them sensible what manner of Persons they ought to be *in all holy Conversation and Godliness* (as St. Peter speaks) being so nearly related to the Son of God. Whatsoever Sin you know them to be addicted unto, lay the heinousness of it before them; especially after God hath loved us so much, as to give his only begotten Son to redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie us to himself a peculiar  
C People,

*people zealous of good Works.* Whatsoever duty you know them to neglect, or to be remiss in the performance of it, represent to them how dangerous it is to disobey our Blessed Saviour, who hath made this the test of our love to him; that we keep his Commandments. Remember them frequently of what he said to his Disciples, in his last Discourse he had with them, XV *John* 14. *Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

5. Endeavour to convince their judgment about these things, by clear Reasons; and then to awaken their Affections by your Zeal and Fervour. And that will be excited in you, by an inward sense and feeling in your own hearts, of that which you deliver to your People. It is an admirable observation of *Erasmus* (in his Book *De ratione Concionandi*) upon these words of our Saviour concerning *John* the Baptist, V *John*

35. *He was a burning and a shining Light.* ARDERE PRIUS EST, LUCERE POSTERIUS. To burn (with Zeal, that is, for God, and fervent affection to the People) is the first thing; and then we shall shine, by Christian instructions. Which will be faint and feeble, if they do not proceed from an ardent Spirit.

6. And there is very much in another thing of which the same great Man, put me in mind, in another part of his Works; Lib.V. Epist. 27. Where he tells *Jodocus Jonas*, *Non parum ponderis adder orationi tuæ, si quæ doces, potissimum ex arcanis voluminibus haurias, si vita doctrinæ responderit; si docendi Officium, nullâ gloriæ, nulla quæstus suspitione vitietur.* 'It will add no  
' small weight to thy Sermons, if  
' thou draw those things that thou  
' tacheest chiefly out of the Holy  
' Scriptures; if thy life be corre-  
' spondent to thy Doctrine: and the  
C 2 'Office



Office of instructing, be tainted  
with no suspicion of vain glory,  
or worldly advantage. The  
proof of what you say out of the  
Holy Scriptures, rightly expound-  
ed and fitly apply'd, will certainly  
make it very powerful. For  
what is there that hath so much  
force in it; as the Authority of  
God? All Believers have a great  
reverence to his Word; which  
the Ancient Christians thought  
the highest learning. Insomuch  
that the *Abyssines* (who retain  
much of the ancient Simplicity)  
are never so pleased, as to hear the  
Word of God alledged; and the  
more Scripture any Man hath in  
his Sermons, the more learned  
they esteem him. So *Ludolphus*  
informs us in his late *Historica Ethi-  
opica*, Lib. III. Cap. V. N. 16.

7. And there is nothing in the  
Holy Scripture that you ought to  
explain with greater care, or in-  
culcate more frequently, than the

Cove-

*Covenant of Grace*, which God hath made with us in Christ. The terms and conditions of which you should endeavour to make your People thoroughly to understand ; both on Gods part, and on their own: together with the *Mediator* of this Covenant, and the means whereby he purchased such gracious Conditions of Salvation for us.

But above all things we must take the greatest care that our life, do not contradict our Doctrine: for it is not sufficient that our Conversation in this World be innocent and unblameable, but we must endeavour to make it exemplary and useful : It must be so ordered as to convince the People that we firmly believe, the excellence of those Vertues which we commend to them : and that our chief aim and design, is to save their Souls. This will procure us love and esteem ; and

make the People look upon us with Reverence, as *Men of God*. Our Office, which is indeed very honourable, is not sufficient to secure us from contempt; if we act not according to it. Nay, men are prone to pry into our lives, to see if they can find a justification of their own evil Practices, by ours. Which is the argument that *Isidorus Peleusiota* uses to a Bishop to be very cautious (Lib. IV. Epist. 219.) ὅτι ἀπὸ μυρίων ἐφδαλμῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν ἐκείνη κατακρίσθαι εἶθι. *because his Life is scanned, and strictly examined, by a thousand eyes and tongues.*

I shall say nothing particularly of our care to avoid, any tangle of *Vain Glory*, and desire of applause in our Preaching; but conclude this matter, with this plain admonition. That in an age so degenerate, as that we now live in, we ought to give all diligence, to *shine as Lights in the World*, as  
well

well as to be *harmless and blameless, the Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation; holding forth the Word of Life*: by our exemplary conversation, that is, as well as by Preaching, II Philip. 15, 16. This St. Paul there makes the duty of all Christians: but above all it concerns the Ministers of Christ; whom he himself calls (V Mat. 13. 14) in a peculiar manner, *the Salt of the Earth, and the Light of the World*. And there never was greater need than now, that we should study to season Men, not only with wholesome Doctrine, but an holy Example: that we may preserve them from the *Corruption, which is in the World through lust*. There is a most dangerous putrefaction of manners (as I may call it) which hath so universally spread among us, that I look upon the Nation as lost, if we should lose our Saviour. Nothing can then

preserve it from utter ruin and destruction. And therefore let us distinguish our selves from others, by our diligence in our calling, by our exemplary Piety and Holiness; that if it be possible, we may save our Nation from perishing.

SECT. VI. The next Office wherein you are concerned, is the *Ministration of Baptism of Infants*. Concerning which I shall only briefly admonish you of these things following.

I. First, that it is your duty to instruct your People frequently, in the nature of this Sacrament: that they may not imagine it an indifferent thing whether their Children be Baptized or no; nor bring them carelessly to the Font, as an old Ceremony that hath been long used in the Church: But they may look upon it as, indeed

deed it is, a solemn dedication of their Children to Christ, and their entrance into the Covenant of Grace; which they stand bound sacredly to keep. And consequently call upon them often to consider their Children after this, as *Christ's Children*; by whom they are regenerate and born again: and therefore ought to be carefully brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. VI *Ephes.* 4.

2. More particularly put them in mind that in Baptism a solemn profession is made of belief in the *Blessed Trinity*: that is of God, in Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: Unto whose Service we are there devoted. For it is no frivolous observation of *Theophylact* upon those Words of our Saviour, XXVIII *Mat.* 19. *Go and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,*

That ἐκ εἰς τὰ ὁ νόμος ἀλλ' εἰς

τὸ ὄνομα ; he does not say, Baptise them into the *Names*, but into the *Name* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. For though they be three, yet their Name, viz. ἡ θεὸς ἑὶς, *Their Godhead* is but one, as he there explains it. One God in three Persons, of whose Love and Favour we are assured in Baptism : and should value it above all the Riches in the World. •

3. And therefore admonish them what care they ought to take to give up their Children, as soon as they can to this *Blessed Trinity* : That they may be under their Care, and partake of the *Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and of the *Love of God*, and the *Communion*, or *Communion*, of the *Holy Ghost*, as St. Paul speaks, 2 Corinb. XIII. 14. And the *first Rubrick* before the Office for private Baptism directs them to admonish the People often, that they defer not the Baptism of their Children, longer than the first or Second Sunday



Sunday next after their *birth*, or other Holy-day falling between ; unless upon a great and reasonable Cause to be approved by you.

4. Next of all you are bound by the following *Rubrick*, to warn them, that without great Cause and Necessity, they procure not their Children to be Baptized at home in their Houses. The reason of which is given in the *first Rubrick* before the Office of *Publick Baptism*, which sets forth the convenience of administering Baptism, only upon Sundays or other Holy-days, when the most number of People come together : *First*, For that the Congregation there present may testify the receiving of such as be newly Baptized into the Number of Christ's Church ; and *Secondly*, that every Man present may be put in remembrance of his own Profession made to God in his Baptism. Which are such wise and holy Reasons, that every Man of Conscience,

ence, who is Considerate, will yield unto them.

5. Advise Parents also about the *Choice* of Godfather and Godmothers, and of the *usefulness* of them. *First*, about their *Choice*, that they be such Persons as have a sense of Religion and understand it; and will take some care, it may be hoped, of their Children, if they themselves should die before they be grown up. It is supposed that as long as Parents live, they will put their Children in mind of their Vow in Baptism: which is the reason that no new Obligation, besides that they have already, is laid upon them, by making them Sureties for their Children. But without this solemn undertaking for them, other Men would not be so ready to assist them, and look after their Education; as it is to be hoped this will make them. Which shows the other thing; the *usefulness* of this Institution: Which in the beginning  
of

of our Religion, was in a manner absolutely necessary. For when Parents were sometimes snatch'd on a sudden from their Children, by bloody Persecutors : They might have been brought up in *Paganism*, if these Spiritual Parents had not been engaged to look after them, and instil Christian Principles into them.

6. You give a charge, after Baptism, to the Godfathers and Godmothers, that they take care, the Child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he is fit for it : And therefore you would do well to remember them, as you have opportunity, of this part of their Duty ; and in order to it to see they be instructed in the Church-Catechism set forth for that purpose.

SECT. VII. Which is the next part of your care diligently, upon Sundays, and Holy-days, to instruct

instruct and examine openly in the Church, so many of the Children of your Parish sent unto you, as you shall think convenient, in some part of the CATECHISM. They are the very words of the *first Rubrick*, in the end of that Office where, in the next *Rubrick*, Fathers, Mothers, Masters, and Dames, are ordered to cause their Children, Servants, and Prentices (which have not learnt their Catechism) to come to the Church at the time appointed, and obediently to hear and to be ordered by you, till they have learned all that is appointed in the *Catechism* for them to learn. It is to be hoped they will do this, if you call upon them, and beseech them to take care of it : letting them know that you are ready and desirous to perform your Duty, if they will do theirs.

And mark, I beseech you, what is required of you, not only to examine the Children in the *Catechism*,  
(that

(that is, to ask them the questions, and receive their answers) but to *instruct* them therein; that is, teach them the meaning, and make them understand the weight of every word. If you would spend a quarter of an Hour, in this exercise all the Summer long, when the days are long, at Evening Prayer, after the Second Lesson (as the *Rubrick* appoints) it would be of wonderful use both to your selves, and to your People. I say to your selves as well as the Parish: because it would put you upon Considering, Collecting and Digesting, such proper places of Scripture as relate to every Article of the Creed, and to the Commandments, and to all other parts of the *Catechism*. And upon studying also and framing the plainest and clearest Explications, and Illustrations of every Point; couched in so few words, that they might easily be carried away and remembred. Which being once well

well done, it would serve you all your Life: The same thing being to be repeated over and over again every Year. For I suppose you may be able once a Year to go through the whole Catechism: Which would certainly edify your People very much, and make them more capable to understand your Sermons, by having a clear Notion of many Terms, which you have constant occasion to use in them. It would bring People also to Church in the Afternoon: For they would soon perceive this short Instruction to be as useful as any Sermon. And consequently they would observe the Lord's-day better: For I cannot but think, that many would by this means, have your Explication of the Catechism by Heart; and be able to instruct their Children again at home.

I shall quicken you to this, by what I find was done about it in the Reign of King *James I.* who  
sent

sent strict Orders to the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, both concerning *Preaching* and *Catechising*; especially the latter: Which he would have by all means continued in the *Afternoon*, according to the former custom in England (so his words are) which it seems then began to be disused. And of this the Lord Keeper *Williams* saith the King was so desirous, that he declared, *If his Bishops would not take care that it should be done, he would recommend it to the care of the Civil Magistrate.* And in a Letter to the Bishop of London, he tells him the reason of all this. *He saw many going away to Popery; or Anabaptism, or other points of Separation, and considering with much admiration, what should be the cause of it (especially since he opposed both so much himself) he could think of none in greater probability, than the lightness, affectedness, and unprofitableness, of that kind of Preaching, which had of late Years been much taken up*



in Court, University, and Country. The usual scope of very many Preachers being noted to be soaring up in points of Divinity, too deep for the Capacity of the People; or the mustering up a great deal of reading; or the displaying of their own Wit; or an ignorant meddling with Civil Matters; or the venting their own Distasts, &c. So the People being bred up with this kind of teaching, and never instructed in the **CATECHETICAL** and Fundamental Points of Religion, were easily led aside from their Religion, either by Papists, or Anabaptists, or other Sectaries. This I find in the *Cabala of Letters*, p. 112. which is necessary to be considered now: Because since that time, the Explication of the Catechism in the Afternoons hath been much neglected; unto which we have reason to impute the instability of many Souls in their Religion.

SECT.

SECT. VIII. When the Children of your Parish are thoroughly instructed in the Church-Catechism, and *are come to a competent Age*, (as the words of the *third Rubrick* are, in the end of that Office) you are to take care that they be brought to the Bishop, to be *Confirmed by him*.

Now such little Children as are commonly presented to the Bishop, cannot be thought to be of a *competent Age*. Which is explained, both in the Title of the *Order of Confirmation*, and the Preface to it, to signify such as *are come to years of Discretion*. That is, to understand what they do; and consent to renew the solemn Promise and Vow, that was made in their Name at their Baptism, ratifying and confirming the same in their own Persons, and acknowledging themselves bound to believe and do what their Godfathers and Godmothers undertook for them.

As

As you are bound therefore, (by the *last Rubrick*, at the end of the Catechism) when the Bishop gives notice of his intention to Confirm, either to bring or send in Writing, with your Hands Subscribed thereunto, the Names of all such Persons within your Parish, as you shall think fit to be Presented to him to be Confirmed : So I beseech you take care you set down the Names of none, but such as have a sense that they take upon themselves an Obligation, to keep their Vow in Baptism ; and are resolved to do their Duty *towards God*, and *towards their Neighbour*, as they have been taught in their Catechism.

In short, I think none ripe to be Confirmed, but such as are fit and disposed, immediately after it, to receive the Holy Communion of Christ's Body and Blood. Our Church seems to signify so much, when in the end of this Office it Ordains, That *none be admitted to*

*to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be Confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be Confirmed.* One of these is plainly here made, a Preparation for the other : And as none should be admitted to the Communion till they be Confirmed; so being Confirmed (or ready for it, and desirous of it) I take it none are to be refused the Communion.

It is of the greatest Concernment therefore, that young People be *discreet* and serious before they be brought to be Confirmed. Of the Necessity of which King *James* before-mentioned, was as sensible, as he was of the Necessity of Catechetical Instruction. For his Son (who was afterwards King *Charles the Martyr*) was not Confirmed till the *thirteenth* year of his Age. Then he was Confirmed on *Easter Monday, 1613.* in *Whitehall-Chappel*, after a *long and strict* Examination by the Arch-bishop of *Canterbury,*

*Canterbury, and the Bishop of Bath and Wells, as Dr. George Hackwell, who was an Ear-witness of the Satisfaction he gave, tells us in a little Tractate he wrote upon that Occasion, concerning Confirmation.*

I conclude this Section with these remarkable Words of a famous Divine of our Church, Dr. Jackson, in his X Book upon the Creed, Chap. 50. (which I have mentioned, with a great deal more upon this Subject, in a little Book about Baptism, near Forty Years ago) *Whether the solemn Baptizing of all Infants, which are the Children of presumed Christian Parents, throughout this Kingdom, without solemn Ass stipulation, that they shall at years of Discretion, personally ratify their Vow in Baptism in Publick, in such manner as the Church requires, be not rather more lawful or tolerable, than expedient, I leave with all submission, to the consideration of higher Powers.*

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In like manner may I be bold to put this Question, Whether it be to any purpose to admit those to this solemn Act of Ratifying and Confirming their Vow in Baptism, who are not arrived at such *Years of Discretion*, as understandingly to consent thereunto, and to remember it all the Days of their Life. For I fear many have been Confirmed, who have no more Memory of what they then did; than they have of what was done to them in Baptism.

SECT. IX. The next Office wherein you are concerned, is *the Solemnization of Matrimony*. Which though it be not a *Sacrament*, yet is such an Holy State, that as there is the greatest reason it should be solemnized with publick Rites and Forms by the Ministers of Christ; so they ought to take care to perform it in a very solemn manner.

It

It may be demonstrated, that no Marriage anciently was ever made among Christians, which the Church did not allow: and the Benediction of Marriage by the Priest was a sign of that allowance. Nay among the Jews it is manifest from the Story of *Boaz* and *Ruth*, that Marriage was Celebrated before the Elders. IV *Ruth* 11. And *Epiphanius* was of Opinion, that our Lord was invited to the Marriage of *Cana* in *Galilee*; that, as a Prophet he might bless the Marriage.

And therefore it ought to be celebrated in the Church, in as publick a manner as may be; and with such Gravity and seriousness, as becomes the Place, and the Priestly Function, and the State it self, which is Holy and Honourable. In order to this, the People are to be instructed often, with what Advice, Deliberation and Reverence, such a weighty Matter,



matter, is to be undertaken. Of which they are excellently admonished in our Liturgy at the time of Marriage: and should be admonished before-hand, that they may not lightly or wantonly enterprise it, but discreetly soberly, and in the fear of God.

For the better security of this, keep strictly to LXII Canon, which requires you to marry none except the Banns of Matrimony have been first Published in time of Divine Service, three several Sundays, or Holy-days: Or a License have been obtained to do it without, according to the Canons C.CI.CII.CIII. Which most reasonably constitute, that none be Married either with License, or after Banns Published, under the Age of *One and Twenty Years compleat*, without the consent of their Parents, or of their Guardians and Governours, if their Parents be deceased.

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Remem.

Remember also that Marriage is to be celebrated publicly in the Parish Church or Chappel, where one of the Parties dwelleth, and in no other place, and that between the hours of Eight and Twelve in the Forenoon. For which reason care is taken by the *Second Rubrick* in the Office of *Matrimony*, that if the Persons that are to be Married dwell in divers Parishes, the Banns must be asked in both Parishes; and the Curate of the One Parish shall not Solemnize Matrimony betwixt them, without a Certificate of the Banns being thrice asked, from the Curate of the other Parish.

These Laws are the more Sacredly to be observed, because they are for the preservation of Human Society. Which made *Plato* say in the beginning of his Book *de Legibus*, that the *Γαμικοὶ νόμοι*, the Laws for the regulating Marriage, should be the very first, which a Law-giver

giver should establish : because the Propagation of Mankind is the support of Cities and Kingdoms : of which if due care be not taken, all other Laws are in Vain.

This very consideration, that Marriage is *Seminarium generis humani* (as *Tertullian* calls it Lib. 1. *ad Uxorem* cap. 2.) was sufficient to make our Church so very cautious in its Constitutions about this important affair : that those many mischiefs might be prevented, which have insued, from the neglect of them in many places. Which have been no less than *incestuous Mixtures* : together with the ruin of several Families, great grief of Parents, by the disobedience of their Children : which hath quite alienated their Affections one from another : not to mention the contempt and reproach it hath brought upon those of the Clergy or others, that have had a hand in these irregular actions.

I question not but all imaginable care will be taken in my Diocess, that no License be granted, but according to the Canon: and, none of My Clergy I perswade myself, can be so mean, as to let a little Money prevail with them to dishonour their Holy Calling, by violating those Wise and Pious Constitutions of our Church, which they have sworn, as I take it, to observe, in their Oath of *Canonical Obedience*.

SECT. X. The next Office which follows in our Liturgy, is that of *Visitation of the Sick*; which ought to be attended very seriously; as much, if not more than any else. For Men are never so sensible of the everlasting concerns of their Souls, as they are when they lye on a sick Bed. If they had no thought of God before, no reflections on their ways; they can scarce avoid them, in that  
con-

condition. *Pliny* tells us, he learnt this by the Sickness of a Friend of his, *Optimos nos esse, dum infirmi sumus*, that we are then the best Men, when we are sick. Read a most pithy Epistle of his, which is wholly upon this Subject. *Lib. VII. Epist. XXVI.* Where among other things he tells *Maximus* (to whom it is directed) 'then a Man remembers that 'there are Gods (that you know is 'the Pagan Language) and that 'he himself is but a Man. Then 'he envies no Man; admires no 'Man; despises no Man; Riches 'signifie nothing to him, nor Honours; Lust is extinguished, &c. 'all that he desires is, that he may 'recover his Health, purposing 'then to lead an innocent and 'happy Life. So that whatsoever 'Philosophers endeavour to teach 'in many words and many Volumes; that I may teach thee 'and my self in this short Precept :

‘ *Ut tales esse sani perseveremus, quales nos futuros profitemur infirmi*, that  
‘ we continue such when we are  
‘ well, as we promise to be when  
‘ we are sick. So he concludes that  
Epistle.

By which you cannot but see what an opportunity the Sickneſs of any of your Pariſhoners affords you, to help forward the Salvation of their Souls, by your Prayers, Inſtructions, and Exhortations: when they are moſt diſpoſed to receive them, and to be tenderly affected with them. Do not ſtay therefore till notice be ſent you by thoſe about them, of any ones Sickneſs (for they are too apt to defer it, till there be no hope of life left) but when you hear of it, repair to ſuch Perſons, and apply your ſelves to them in ſuch diſcourſes as are proper to their condition.

Examine them, as the Office directs, about their belief in God,  
and

and in Jesus Christ, and all the rest of the Articles of the Christian Faith. If they have led a bad Life, contrary to their belief, represent to them how highly it concerns them to repent, and resolve to become new Men. Bid them consider how much they have neglected God, and his Divine Service (which is a common Sin) and also what wrong they have done to any of their Neighbours; that they may make them what Satisfaction they are able. If they have lived in most things regularly, but been negligent in some Duties; comfort and support them with this perswasion, that God hath sent this Sickness to perfect what was wanting in them. As for such as have led truly Pious Lives, void of Offence towards God and towards Man, they are to be strengthened with all the Consolations that are in Christ; and raised in their hope



of Remission of Sin and Eternal Life, which will banish all fear of Death. By this means not only the sick Person may receive great Benefit; but all the By-standers also, who hear your Discourse: Which may raise such a sense of things in you, as will much improve your selves.

And here I shall admonish you only of one thing more, leaving you to the directions in the Office, for the rest: That *Absolution* of Penitents, is a thing of great moment; which may alone be sufficient to convince you both of the *Dignity*, and the *Difficulty* of your Holy Function. For what an high Honour is it to be made a Judge of the state of Mens Immortal Souls, and to pronounce a Sentence upon them, according as you find them, upon Examination? But how industriously then ought you to labour to understand the Gospel of Christ, where-

whereby you are to Judge ; that you may not pass a wrong Sentence, through ignorance of the Conditions of Salvation by Christ? Whose promises are made plainly to an Holy Life, which if it hath not been minded, till a Man come to die; let him not despair of God's Mercy, but take heed how you absolve him in his Name: For we can make no certain judgment of Men, by what they resolve in their Sickness, when they have no Temptation to run on in their former Wicked course of Life: but must stay to see how they will keep their Resolutions, which they too often break, when they are well. If they do not live to give a proof of their Sincerity, God notwithstanding, who knows the Secrets of all Hearts, if he see them to be sincere, and that they would be steadfast, should they have recover'd their Health, will undoubtedly absolve them, though

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they

they depart the World without our Absolution. In short, this may well (as the *Pythagoræans* were wont to admonish their Schollars) make, you *reverence your selves*, so as to live up to this Dignity and high Authority, he hath committed to you: and this very Power, if you use it well, will procure you *reverence from others*, who understand any thing of Religion.

At the end of this Office, is annexed the Order of Administring *the Communion to the Sick*: which Mr. Calvin himself thinks (though it was not the usage of *Geneva*) should not be deny'd to them, if they desired it, and understood what they did, and were disposed with solemn Resolutions to renew their Covenant with Christ. But timely notice ought to be given of this desire, with a signification how many there are to communicate with the Sick Person, which must be three or two at the least; unless

less it be in the time of a Plague ;  
or other Contagious Disease, when  
the Minister may Communicate  
with him alone.

SECT. XI. Concerning the  
next thing in our Liturgy, which  
is *The Order for the Burial of the*  
*DEAD*, there needs not much  
to be said. But that commonly  
Men and Women are apt to be  
very serious, when they see their  
Friends and Neighbours laid in  
their Graves: and therefore what  
you are then ordered to say either,  
when you meet the Corps, or in  
the Church, or at the Grave, should  
be pronounced with great Gra-  
vity, Earnestness, and Affection ;  
that the Hearts of those who are  
present may be moved with it.  
If you are desired to come to the  
House of the Deceased, and  
thence to accompany the Corps to  
the Grave, you may have an op-  
portunity to put those in mind  
who

who sit near to you, of preparation for Death; which should never be out of our thoughts, but then especially be sensibly reflected on, when we have a Spectacle of Mortality before our Eyes. Who was as strong and healthy perhaps as any there present; and yet on a sudden snatch'd away. Such things piously represented, are apt, (for the present at least) to touch Mens Hearts, and make deep impressions there.

SECT. XII. Of the *Churching of Women*, after Child-birth, I shall say only this: that the First *Rubrick* directs that the Woman, at the usual time after Delivery, shall come into the Church decently Apparelled, and *there kneel down in some convenient place, as hath been accustomed.* Now the accustomed place (it appears by our Old Common-Prayer Book before the Restauration) was *nigh to the Commu-*

*Communion Table.* To put her in mind I suppose, that she should take the next opportunity, to receive the Holy Communion: if there be none that day, when the last *Rubrick* declares, it is convenient she should partake of it. Unto this therefore you are to Exhort her, that she may perfect her acknowledgments of Gods goodness; by the highest *Thanksgiving* the Church can offer; and which is proper and peculiar to Christian People.

SECT. XIII. The last Office wherein you are concerned, is the Reading *the Communion*, which is to be done but once a Year, on the first day of *Lent*: though the Prayers then appointed are to be used at other times, as the Ordinary shall appoint. This if done solemnly, though it seem a thing of no great labour; yet might have a great effect. For every

every one knows (or ought to know) that the *Lent Fast* was Instituted, to be a time of *Repentance*: and to bring Men to it, what can be more effectual than this *Denunciation of God's Anger and Judgments against Sinners*; with most comfortable assurances of Grace and Mercy to the Penitent?

I know it is hard, as the World goes, to get a Congregation together, upon that day; when this is required to be read in the Church. You may therefore read it on the *First Sunday in Lent*; and then put the Sense of it into your Sermon: where it may be proper to press them to weigh every part of it distinctly. And in order to it, remove that foolish Objection, which I have heard some have in their Mouths, that they cannot endure to Curse their Neighbours: by showing them plainly, that they are not the  
Curses



Curses of the People, but of God himself, which he hath denounced against Sinners. To which when the People are ordered to say AMEN, they only consent to the truth of that which God saith. The very Office teaches this, when it declares the end of reading those Curses gathered out of the XXVII of *Deuteronomy* and other places of Scripture, and the Peoples saying *Amen* to them; *that they may flee from such vices, for which they affirm with their own mouth the Curse of God to be due.* And represent to them also, that whether they will affirm these Curses to be due, or no; they will fall upon them, if they be such Sinners as are there named: and the sooner, because they refuse to say *Amen* to the Words of God: that is affirm what he affirms, who is *the Faithful and the True.*

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This Cavil being taken away, it will be easie to make them sensible, how useful it is for them to joyn with you in this *Commination*: which may awaken drousy Souls, to consider and amend their evil doings; that they may escape those Judgments that are threatened to them, which are unavoidable, if they go on still in their Sins.

There was something like this among the ancient *Jews*, who at certain stated times, were wont to denounce a general *Anathema*, against all the *Israelites*, who knowingly and willingly, violated such and such Laws. A Form of which Mr. *Selden* hath given us out of their Ritual, called *Colbo*, Lib. IV. *De Jure Nat. & Gent.* cap. 7. This it is likely the Christian Church thought fit to imitate; not by denouncing a formal *Anathema*, but only by a solemn recital of the Threatnings in God's Laws, against  
impe-

impenitent Sinners : And their affirming the truth, and certainty of them. Which in the *Romish Church* came at last to such an *Anathema* as I now mentioned in the Jewish Ritual : call'd, *The greater Excommunication* : which here in *England* was denounced by every Bishop twice a year ; and by every Parish-Priest four times a year, against certain Persons. A Form of which *great Curse*, the same most Learned Person hath given us, out of the Ritual, according to the use of the Church of *Sarum*, in his first Book *De Synedriis*, Cap. X. where he observes that in the room of this our first Reformers only ordered this *Maledictory Commination* (as he well styles it) to be used once a Year.

In the beginning of which *Commination* there is mention made of a godly Discipline in the Primitive Church, whereby such Persons as stood Convicted of notorious sins, were

were in the beginning of *Lent* put to open Penance. This Discipline we there wish might be restored again ; but seem to suppose, that for the present, we can only, instead of it, *denounce God's anger and judgments against sinners*, and make them say *Amen* thereunto ; whereby they may stand *Convicted* in their own Consciences, that they are under the Curse of God, and so be brought to Repentance. Had we not need then do this very seriously, if it be all that we can do of this kind ? Yet let it be considered, whether we may not be able to do something more ; if we will attempt it. For may not scandalous Persons be more frequently presented, than they are ? May not private Admonitions, if not publick, be more used ? Let us not then think fit to do nothing, because we cannot do all that we would. The right way to enlarge our Authority, (of the want of which we complain)

plain) is to use that which we have uprightly and faithfully. That is, if we presented none in the Ecclesiastical Court, till private Applications had been made to them, with seriousness and earnestness, unsuccessfully ; and if it were done without respect to Persons, Parties, or Interests , we might bring our Courts into that just esteem and credit, which they ought to have.

And having mentioned private Admonition, let me, in a few words, remember you, that at your Ordination, you promised to *use both publick and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick, as to the whole within your Cures, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given.* And perhaps more good might be done this way than any other ; if it were done at fitting times, with as much secrecy as may be, and with apparent affection to them. In some Cases  
per-

perhaps it may be done most effectually, by Letter : which may be sent, when you cannot have opportunity to speak to them. And here it may be proper to admonish you, that Dissenters from our Church are thus to be dealt withal ; by some way of private Conference with them , not by Preaching against them, for they are not there to hear it. Our own People indeed are by publick Discourses, as well as otherways, to be confirmed and established in our Communion : But there is no way to reduce them, but by private arguing with them. Which is not to be omitted ; because the present act of Indulgence, doth not justify them in their separation, but only suspends the Punishments to which they were before liable. Still they are in a state of Schism, out of which you should endeavour to recover them, by kind Perswasions and Arguments, which may work more upon

upon them than all the Penalties formerly *inflicted*, which made them Angry, but did not Convert them.

For the Conclusion of this part of my Treatise, I should upon the mention of LENT have said something concerning that *Fast*, and other days of *Fasting or Abstinence*, appointed by the Church, which if Men could be perswaded to observe, as times of Recollection, and Examination of themselves, and Prayer, they would find great benefit thereby, to the encrease of Christian Piety. I wrote a little Book about it in the beginning of the late Reign; which had the Approbation of my Superiours: But I have not room to say more of it here. Nor of the *Festivals* which are ordered to be kept, in Commemoration of great Blessings God hath bestowed upon us. Of which you should endeavour to make your People sensible; whereby they may be induced to observe them with  
Religi.



Religious Joy. Especially the three chief Festivals, in memory of our Saviour's *Nativity*, *Resurrection*, and the *Coming of the Holy Ghost*.

But it is time to proceed to the other part of this Discourse, which I propounded in the beginning: And I must be the shorter in it, because I have been longer in this, than I at first intended.

PART

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P A R T II.

**H**AVING laid before you the Duties both private and publick, which belong to your Holy Function ; I come now to treat a little of *the Spirit wherewith they ought to be Performed.*

SECT. I. And above all things you must labour to possess your Hearts with a Spirit of *Love to God*, whose Servants you are, and who employs you in the most Glorious Work, in the World. A Spirit, I say, of *Love to God the Father*, who hath sent his Son to be the Saviour of the World, and to God the Son, who loved the Church and gave himself for it ; and to God the *Holy Ghost*, who hath, by

a peculiar Grace, separated you from other Men, to Minister unto Christ in his Church. Which was a Witness of what was said to you at your Ordination; *Receive the Holy Ghost, for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God.* These were not empty words, nor mere lofty Expressions, without any Power in them: But an effectual Prayer for the Holy Spirit of Grace, which was then conferred upon you. And should mightily move you to serve the Church of Christ, in the love of the Spirit, as St. Paul speaks, XV Rom. 30. That is, in the Love, which the Spirit of God inspires you withal. For, as he saith before in that Epistle V. 5. *The love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* So we pray in the Hymn, which is recited at the Ordination of Priests.

*Come*

*Come Holy Ghost, our Souls inspire,  
And lighten us with Cælestial fire.  
Thy blessed Unction from above,  
Is comfort, life, and fire of Love.*

These are not vain words, if sent up with ardent Affection to God, but procure for us the power of the Holy Spirit, to enlighten, and enliven, and warm our Hearts with the Knowledge and Love of God our Saviour. Which Love we should every day endeavour to stir up; by reflecting upon the wonderful Love of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost unto us. For so St. Chrysostom notes upon those words of St. Paul, XV Rom. 30. He mentions the Love of the Spirit, *καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν τὸν κόσμον, καὶ ὁ πατήρ, ἔγω καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα*; For as Christ and the Father hath loved the World, so hath the Spirit. Upon this Love we ought to reflect every Morning, and ponder it so long,

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till we find it excite in us that *Heavenly fire* of Love to God ; which we prayed for at our Ordination.

For if we preserve this Flame in our Hearts ; it will make us cheerful as well as diligent, restless and unwearied in the work of the Lord. Nothing can carry us thorough it, like this ; and render it so easy and sweet to us : as to think we are serving our good God, in that which he loves and delights to have done ; and to feel that every thing we do proceeds from love to him, and to his service.

Our Saviour teaches us, that this is the Principle by which all his Ministers ought to Act, in that Question which he asks St. Peter, and repeats it thrice after his Resurrection, *Simon Peter lovest thou me?* (XXI Job. 15, 16, 17.) And in the command which follows upon his profession that he sincerely loved Him, *Feed my Lambs, and feed my Sheep ;* take

take care of the Souls of Young and Old, that they want not their proper Food. For they are so dear to him (as *Theophylact* there Notes) that he makes our care of *them*, to be the mark of our Affection to him; *Τὴς εἰς αὐτὸν ἀγάπης τὸ ποιεῖν τεκμήριον*. For it is therefore a certain token of our Love to him; because it flows from thence as from its Fountain and Spring. If we love *him*, we can never neglect *them*. This will make us studious and industrious to promote the Salvation of those Souls, whom Christ so dearly loved: It being the truest Expression of our Love to Christ. So *St. Chrysostom* upon this place: Christ repeated this so often, to show us, *πῶς δὲ τὸ πρῶτον μάλιστα αὐτὸν ἀγαπᾶν*, After what manner we ought chiefly to love him, by taking care of his flock. Can any Man read this then and be negligent? No; not if he Love the Lord Jesus in Sincerity: who hath

bid him demonstrate his Love, by feeding his Lambs and his Sheep. There are several other things, saith that great Father of the Church, which may give us some Confidence towards God, nay make us Illustrious and Famous : *But that which above all things wins us the favour of Heaven, is, ἡ περὶ τὰς πλησίων ἀνδριμονία, our tender care of our Neighbours.* Which leads to the next thing ;

SECT. II. Which is a sincere Love and Affection to the Souls of Men, which Christ hath redeemed with his precious Blood. If we make an estimate of them by the price which was paid for them, we cannot set too high a value upon them : And if we look upon them as invaluable Beings (purchased at so dear a rate) we shall do all we can to save them ; and be exceeding fearful, lest any of them should



should be lost through our Negligence.

Preserve therefore, and keep alive in your Hearts, a *Spirit of love to the Souls of Men*; especially to your Parishioners. And there is no way to do this like to the Consideration, what it cost to Redeem them; no less than the Blood of the Son of God: who demonstrated thereby how precious they are in themselves, and how dear to him. Bestow a few thoughts upon this every day, and it will beget and continue in you the greatest Kindness, and tenderest Compassion towards them: And that will move you to lay out your selves with the utmost Diligence, in all the Offices belonging to your Function. And this, both for his sake, and for theirs; that, he may see *of the travel of his Soul, and be satisfied* (as the Prophet speaks *LIII Isa. II.*) and that they may obtain the Salvation which is in Christ Je-

*sus, with Eternal Glory, 2 Tim.*  
2. 10.

I shall conclude what I have said of these two things (*a Spirit of love to God, and to the Souls of Men*) with a notable Discourse of *St. Austin's*. Who in a Letter to *Longinians*, a Pagan Philosopher, remembers him of this saying of one of the Ancients, *quibus satis persuasum esset, ut nihil mallent mallet se esse, quam viros bonos, his reliquam facilem esse doctrinam*; unto those who were perswaded so far, as to desire nothing but to be made good Men, all the rest of the Instructions, that Philosophers could give them, would be very easy. This he saith he took to be a saying of *Socrates*, which must be acknowledged to be excellent. But then he tells him, there is a far more ancient propheticall saying, which preceded this many Ages; teaching Men briefly and at once, not only to desire nothing but to be made good Men;

men; but also how they may be made truly good, viz. Love the LORD thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy mind; and thy Neighbour as thy self. To him who can be perswaded to do this, *Non ei reliquam facilem, sed eam totam esse doctrinam duntaxat utilem & salubrem.* I do not say as Socrates did, that all the rest will be easy; but that this is the whole only profitable and wholesome Doctrine; and there needs no more. *Epist. XX.*

Keep this therefore perpetually in your Heart, which contains in it all things else. Love the Lord your God, and love your Neighbour; and you have done all you need to do: for all is included in this: You will not be wanting in your Duty to either of them, if you heartily Love them.

SECT. III. My next Advice shall be in the words of the blessed Apostle St. Paul, (who hath left us a wonderful Example, of most tender affection to mens Souls, read *1 Thes. 2, 7, 8, 11.*) *Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks un- to God and the Father by him.* Ill *Coloss. 17.* That is, when you are going to perform any part of your Office, pray him to be present with you, and assist you. So St. Chrysostom (and out of him Theophylact) Expounds these words, *in the Name of Christ, αὐτὸν καλῶν βοηθῶν*, calling upon him to be thy Helper, *πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν ἐυχόμενοι καὶ ὅπως ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων;* First making thy prayer to him, and so go about thy business. When you put on your Surplice, for instance, think with your selves that you are going to offer up the Prayers of the People to God, in  
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*the Name of Jesus Christ* : And then with what Solemnity, with what Reverence will you perform that Sacred Office ? Especially when you have besought him to be with you, and believe that he is nigh to all them that call upon him in Truth. In like manner when you go up into the Pulpit ; consider with your selves, that you are going to speak in *the Name of Christ*, unto his People ; beseeching him to assist you, and to carry home the Truths you shall deliver to their Hearts and Consciences. For *dexterius loquentur cum hominibus, qui prius tota mente cum Deo fuerunt collocuti*, as *Erasmus* excellently speaks, they will speak with Men more dextrously, who have first of all, with their whole Soul, spoken with God. The like I might say, of other parts of your Duty, which will then be most successfully discharged ; when you have engaged our Lord by solemn Prayer to him,

to go along with you, and accompany you.

*Theodoret* hath another interpretation, or rather a further improvement of the sense of these words: which is this, *adorn all your words and actions*, τῇ μνήμῃ τῆ διαπόλει Χριστοῦ, *with the remembrance of the Lord Christ*. That is, having invoked his blessed presence to be with you, think what he would do, how he would behave himself, and with what Spirit he would perform such things, as you are going about. For example, when you are going to compose a Sermon, it would be of great use and efficacy, if you would think with your selves, what Christ would say to your People, if he were to speak to them; what he would require of them; with what Motives he would excite them; and what Compassion he would

would exprefs to their Souls. It would be impoffible then, for any Man, if he had Chrift in his mind, to fay any thing, but what he hath well confidered, and will tend to make Men good. He will not Preach for his own glory, but for the glory of Chrift: purfuing things profitable, rather than plaufible; not affecting in his difcourfe *lenocinia fed remedia*, fuch things as may tickle the ears of idle People, but fuch as will cure their Difcafes and Diftempers. They are the Words of *Salvian* in his Preface to his Book *de Gubernatione Dei*. Which are agreeable to the old Rule, which *Rittershufius* there mentions *Μή μοι τὰ κομψὰ, ἀλλ' ὅν δεῖ τῇ πόλει*. Give me not Spruce things, but fuch as the City needs.

They that interpret the words to this fenfe, *be fo mindful of Chrift, that you do nothing indecorous, nothing*



*thing unbecoming the relation you have to him, nothing that may dishonour him; differ not much from the former. And therefore I conclude this Advice as the Apostle doth his Admonition: As we ought to begin every thing with a devout remembrance of Christ, whose blessing upon us, we ought to implore; so we ought to end all by giving thanks to God through him. That's as acceptable to him as our Prayers; nay, is a powerful Prayer for more of his Grace. For none 'are so likely to receive more as those who thankfully acknowledge what they have received already. And therefore let all your doings, be thus begun and ended, in the Name of Christ. Whereby you will be preserved in his Love and Favour; and partake still more of his grace.*

SECT. IV. Especially if you do all this in *Sincerity* of heart. Which is that good Soil, wherein, if the Seed of the Word be not sown and received, it brings forth no Fruit to Perfection: and which our Saviour more particularly required in his Apostles, who were to sow that good Seed in Mens hearts. Such Persons, it is manifest, he sought for, as were plain, simple, and honest hearted: having no worldly end to serve, but wholly bent to know the way to Eternal Salvation. *Andrew* and *Peter* who were first called to follow him, it is evident, were of this Spirit; for they left all they had to attend him: and next to them *Philip*, who finding *Nataniel*, and telling him they had found the MESSIAH *Jesus of Nazareth*, to whom he pray'd him to go along with him; as soon as our Savi-

Saviour saw him, he said (to shew what kind of Men he delighted in) *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile, I John 47.* which was a surprising Character of him, after Nathaniel had made this objection against our Saviour, *can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* But, as Theophylact well observes, those were not *πρῶτα ἀντίστα* words of unbelief: but *ἀντιθέτας* ἡ νομομαδὴς διακρίσεως *πρῶτον* words of a mind that accurately weighed things, and was well studied in the Law: which taught him that Christ was to come out of *Bethleem* in *Judaea*, not out of *Nazareth* in *Galilee*. By this our Saviour judged of his *Sincerity*, which appeared also, in that, notwithstanding this seeming prejudice, he went along with *Philip* to be better informed of our Saviour.

This is one great part of that *Sincerity*, which I am now recommending

mending to you: to have your minds free from the power of Prejudice and partial Affections; being desirous only to know the truth, and understand what the will of the Lord is. So St. Chrysostom upon these words Ἀδέκαστος ὁ αὐτὸς ἢ κελσις ἰδὲν πρὸς χάριν, ἰδὲν πρὸς ἀπὸχρησιν φθέρηται. His judgment was uncorrupt and unbiassed, and pronounced nothing either out of Favour and Affection, or out of dislike and hatred.

Another token of which Sincerity there follows: in that after this high commendation which our Lord gave him, he was not at all elated by it, nor ran away with these Encomiums, (as the same Father speaks) ἀλλ' ἐπιμύθῃσι ζῆτῶν, καὶ ἀκριβέστερον διερευνώμενος, &c. but continues enquiring, and searching more exactly: being desirous of this alone to be more perfectly satisfied in the Truth. As he

he was upon his next Question, and our Saviour's Answer to it.

By this it appears that *sincerity of heart* is the best Disposition to understand the mind of Christ, and to be employ'd by him in the Ministry of the Gospel, as the Apostles were. Who had regard to Nothing in this World; but only to the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Men: in which also they found the highest Satisfaction, or rather Rejoycing and Glorifying. For so St. Paul saith, 2 Corintb. I. 12. *Our rejoycing (or glorying, or boasting) is this, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity, and Godly sincerity, &c. We have our Conversation in the World.* He served our Lord, that is, with pure intention: designing nothing but to win Souls to him, by delivering his mind sincerely to them: and seeking no greater Satisfaction,

on, than to have it believed and obeyed. ἐδὲν δολερόν, ἔχ' ὑπόκεισιν, &c. as St. Chrysostom glosses on those words, *There was nothing deceitful in him; No Hypocrisy, no Simulation, no Flattery, no Craft or Fraud, or any thing of that kind: but he acted with all freedom, in Simplicity, in Truth, in a pure, uncorrupt Judgment, and clear intention: having nothing concealed and hidden underneath, nothing rotten at the bottom.* Thus he explains himself in the Second Chapter of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians v. 3, 4, 5. *For our Exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor of guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing Men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others.* This

This admirable Spirit, let us imitate; endeavouring after such a degree of this Vertue, as to be glad if Men could look into our Hearts, and see our secret intentions and designs; as we are sure God doth. Who as *he is witness* to them (as the Apostle speaks) so will judge us according to our uprightness and integrity in seeking to do him honour, and to promote the Salvation of Souls.

Thus the Fathers of the Church, particulary St. Gregory Nazianzen, distinguish a Political Christian, from a Spiritual. Πολιτικῶ μὲν γὰρ ἔργον εἶναι, πάντα ποιεῖν καὶ λέγειν, ἵνα ᾧ εὐδοκμήσῃ, &c. A Political Person, or a Man of this Worlds business, is to do and to say all things whereby he may do himself credit, and be honoured by others: designing no happiness, beyond this present Life. But a Spiritual Mans business, is to take care of his



his Salvation: and highly to esteem what contributes unto that, but to look upon that which doth not, as nothing worth. In short, To esteem those things above all others, *ὅς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ πλεῖστα ἀξίωμαται*, &c. By which he himself may be made most worth; and he may draw others by himself, to the best and most excellent things. Orat. XIX. p. 300.

SECT. V. There are some other qualities, that make up the Character of a good Minister of Jesus Christ: of which I have not room, in this little Treatise, particularly to discourse. For he ought to serve the Lord with all humility of mind, XX Acts 19. with Patience also, 2 Tim. II. 24. and with Meekness, 2 Tim. II. 25. All which St. Paul hath commended to us, together with the foregoing qualities, in that admirable de-

description he makes of himself. 2 *Corinth.* VI. 3, 4, 5, 6. &c. which was part of the Epistle, I observed, for the First Sunday in *Lent*. Where he first of all saith, that they took care, to give no offence in any thing, that the Ministry might not be blamed. Of which I shall briefly speak a little, when I have first laid before you what follows. But in all things approving our selves as the Ministers of God. Not merely shewing themselves, (saith *Oecumenius* on the place) but more than that approving, or commending themselves: which signifies a demonstration δι' ἔργων καὶ ἀληθείας by real Works and Deeds, to be truly Christ's Ministers. Which demonstration, saith he, they gave first of all ἐν ὑπομονῇ in *Patience*; nay, he adds much *Patience* πάντα φέροιτες γενναίως τὰ ῥηθι σόμενα generously bearing all that was said of them; that is, Mens  
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Censures, Reproaches, and Calumnies : yea, and all the sufferings and miseries, they pleased to heap upon them : Which he expresses in the next words, *in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings.* Upon which I cannot enlarge ; nor upon what he saith of their *Pureness* and *Knowledge* ( i. e. their Divine Wisdom, whereby they approved themselves God's Ministers, not by Humane Philosophy as the same *Oecumenius* expounds it) and all the rest. But only take Notice of what he saith, *v. 7. by the armour of righteousness on the Right hand, and on the Left.* As if he had said, would ye know how we come to perform such things (as the same Author expounds it) give ear then to what follows ; it was by being armed on both sides, on the *right,*  
and

and on the left; which are not so contrary, but the *Armour of Righteousness* fitted both. By the right hand, saith he, the Apostle understands τὰ ἐμδέξια, prosperous things, such as honour and esteem among Men; which did not make us swell, nor puff us up with Vain Glory: and therefore were the Armour or Weapons of Righteousness. On the left hand, were the things contrary to these, Temptations, Persecutions, Reproaches, and Injuries; by which we were not dejected nor cast down; as by the other we were not elated. As if he had said in other words, μὴτε τοῖς καλοῖς ἐπαυρόμενοι, μὴτε τοῖς κακοῖς μαλακίζόμενοι neither lifted up by good things, nor disheartened by evil. A proof of which immediately follows, by honour and by dishonour, by evil report and good report. In which words saith that  
 Author,

Author, he recounts the right hand, and the left hand things. And in this Spirit, we ought to serve the Lord Christ: not minding the vain praise of Men, nor their dispraise: but only endeavouring to approve our selves to our Blessed Lord and Master, with an equal mind in all Conditions.

Before I end this, I cannot but a little reflect upon those words, wherewith the Apostle begins this discourse, giving no offence in any thing, that the Ministry be not blamed. Which admonishes us cautiously to avoid every thing at which Men may take just exception, for this very reason: least the Gospel of Christ should be hindered; and our fault be laid upon our Religion.

There is a remarkable Precept to this purpose, which the Apostle gives both to *Timothy* and to *Titus*.

*1 Tim.*

I *Tim.* IV. 12. II *Tit.* 15. Let no Man despise thee. Which some may fancy (as *Theodoret* observes) to be a command belonging to others rather than to us: who cannot hinder Mens despisals. But that's a mistake, in the Apostles opinion, who would have *Timothy* to know, that he who commands and teaches others may preserve himself from contempt by this means (though he was a young Man) ἐμψυχὸς νόμος γυνῆς, &c. Be thou a living Law, show in thy self the perfect work of the Law; lead such a life as will bear witness to thy words. Which life he describes in the words immediately following, be thou an example of the Believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity. He that thus makes himself ὁμοεικὼς ἐμψυχὸς, καὶ ὁρῶν ἁγίας (as *Oecumenius* expresses it) as it were

*a living Image and Rule of a good Life,* will preserve himself from contempt; and not lose but maintain his Authority.

To conclude this; there is nothing the Devil more desires and endeavours than to alienate the hearts of the People from their Ministers: and therefore they should take the greatest care to do nothing that may give the least occasion of it. And here I cannot forbear to mind you of one thing, which hath given no small Scandal: which is, the not keeping your Houses, and that part of the House of God, which belongs to the care of some Ministers, in good Repair, and leaving them so to their Successors. This argues a very careless, or covetous, sordid Spirit; minding nothing but a Mans self, and the present World, and having no consideration of the future.

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I hope I need not exhort you to observe the LXXV Canon of our Church: which requires you not to resort to any Taverns or Ale-houses at any time, other than for your honest necessities, &c. Which occasions cannot be frequent, nor of any long continuance. I shall only tell you that *Julian* the Apostate, in his famous Letter to *Arsacius* the High Priest of the Pagan Religion in *Galatia*, having commended the Exemplary Charity of Christians, to the imitation of his Priests, adds (after some other good Admonitions of governing their Families well) Παρέινεσον ἱερεῖα μὴτε δαίτῳ· παρεβάλλειν μὴτε ἐν καπηλείῳ πίνειν, &c. Exhort a Priest, that he neither go into the Theatre, nor drink in a Tavern; nor exercise any base or ignominious art. Honour those that obey these Orders, and put the disobedient out of their Office. Epist.

XLIX. This shewes how sensible he was of the necessity of the Apostolical Precept, that he who ministred to God, *should have a good report of them which are without.* i. e. are not of his Religion. 1 Tim. III. 7.

To Conclude, think often what an honour it is to serve the Lord Jesus ; and what Care he took of his Flock : How invaluable the Souls of Men are, which he purchased with his Blood. What an inestimable Treasure the Gospel of Christ is, wherewith you are intrusted : in what an high Station God hath placed you : and then you will never submit to so much as any mean Action ; but do such things as may procure you esteem ; or at least prevent contempt.

And to keep this Good Spirit in you, which I have described, it would be of singular Use to read every Lord's day (at least every Ordination Sunday) the Vows and Promises you made when you were admitted into Holy Orders: Which are so Solemn, that it is impossible not to be moved by them, if they be not merely read, but seriously weighed and considered.

These Instructions I have Written in the midst of great variety of Business, and with many interruptions; which may make them defective in many Particulars, and less accurate than they might otherwise have been: But what they want in that, will be made up, I hope by the sincere desire I have to do good, and by the Grace

*the Ministry.* I 2 F

of God accompanying all honest  
endeavours. Unto which Grace  
I most heartily commend you;  
and rest,

*Your*

March 19.  
1697.

*Affectionate Brother,*

20 MA 59

Sy. Eliens.

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The Dignity

OF THE

*Christian Priesthood.*

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The Dignity

OF THE

Christianity



THE  
DIGNITY  
OF THE

Christian Priesthood.

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By *ST MON* Lord Bishop  
of *EL Y*.

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Directed to his Clergy at his  
Fourth Triennial Visitation.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for *Ri. Chiswell*, at the Rose and  
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THE  
DIGNITY

OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM



BY THE

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OF THE

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## *The Dignity of the Christian Priesthood.*

Dear Brethren.

**T**HERE is nothing,  
as I have often re-  
presented unto you, more  
effectual to excite every one  
of us to our Duty, and to  
make us Diligent therein,  
than frequent reflections  
upon the solemn Charge  
given us at our Ordination,

A 3                      and

and our Promises which thereupon ensue. In which we are admonished unto how high a Dignity, and to how weighty an Office God hath been pleased to call us. And thereby are awaken'd to consider, with how great care and study we ought to apply our selves ; as well that we may shew our selves dutiful and thankful unto that Lord, who hath placed us in so high a Dignity ; as also to beware that neither we our selves Offend , nor be occasion that others Offend.

Now

*Christian Priesthood.* 3

Now that we may be sensible of the Excellency of our Office (upon which depends the weight and difficulty of it) I have thought fit, instead of the usual Speech at my Visitation, to present you with a small Treatise upon that Subject. And I have chosen to ground it upon those famous words of our Lord to St. Peter, XVI St. Matthew, in the beginning of the 19th Verse, *And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; that I may at*

A 4 the

4     *The Dignity of the*  
the same time, instruct you  
in your Duty, and explain  
a difficult passage of the  
Holy Scripture.

Two things must be  
premised, before I can give  
you the true sense of these  
words; *I will give thee the*  
*keys of the kingdom of heaven;*  
and propose the Matter of  
which I intend to Dis-  
course.

The *First* is, That the  
Power which these words  
import, was not bestowed  
upon

*Christian Priesthood.* 5

upon St. Peter alone (as they of the Roman Church imagine) but what Christ here spake to him, as the prime Apostle, he intended unto all the rest.

This is manifest by comparing three places in the Gospel together, which speak of this Power. For what is here said of it, by way of *prediction* or *promise*, that he would confer it; is a little after spoken of by way of *description* and *explication* of the nature of this power, and the *manner* of

A 5

using

## 6 The Dignity of the

using it: as you may see in the XVIIIth Chapter of this Gospel, from v. 15 to the 21st. where v. 18. he speaks in the plural number, *Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose, &c.* which is the very same power, and in the same Words promised here to St. Peter, *I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed*



*Christian Priesthood.* 7

loosed in heaven. And then, in a third place, when this power is *actually* conferred upon them, they are all invested with it; after our Saviour's Resurrection, but before his Ascension, XX St. John 22, 23. where he doth not say λάβε, *receive thou*, as if he spake to one alone; but λάβετε, *receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained*: Which, it is evident, was spoken indifferently to every one of them. Now

## 8    *The Dignity of the*

Now the *Second* thing to be premised is, That the power intended to be conferred by these words, was not given only to the Apostles, but to their Successors also, unto the end of the World; and to all those that their Successors should invest with it, in their several Orders and Degrees.

This will be clear, by considering not only the needs of the Church; which was not to continue only while the Apostles lived,  
but

*Christian Priesthood.* 9

but while the World lasted :  
But also from the time  
when this Power was be-  
stowed upon them ; which  
must be carefully observed.  
Now it was given , either  
on the Evening after our  
Saviour's Resurrection, or  
else Eight Days after it :  
For the place in that parti-  
cular seems to be dubious.  
XX *St. John* 19. Which  
soever it was , this time  
shews that this Power was  
not bestowed upon them as  
Apostles, or as having an  
extraordinary Office which  
was

10 *The Dignity of the*

was to expire ; but as the ordinary Pastors and Curates of Souls. For their extraordinary Mission, by the Gift of the Holy Ghost ; and whatsoever should qualify them for the Office of Apostles ( that is, to preach the Gospel to all Nations ) was not bestowed upon them till Ten Days after his Ascension into Heaven ; when the Day of Pentecost was come. For our Lord had said to them just before his Ascension, *Depart not from Jerusalem, but wait for the*

Christian Priesthood. 11

the promise of the Father  
( 1 Act. 4. 8. ) And ye shall  
receive power after the holy  
Ghost is come upon you : And  
ye shall be witnesses unto me  
both in Ferusalem, and in  
Judea, and in Samaria, and  
unto the uttermost part of the  
Earth.

This is a thing to be  
carefully heeded, as I said;  
for in the following Dis-  
course, I shall shew there is  
great use of it.

And now having pre-  
mised these two things,  
there

12    *The Dignity of the*

there are two more to be explained : and then we shall be easily let into the sense of these Words ; and see what we are to observe from them.

*First, What is meant by the kingdom of heaven.*

*Secondly, What by the keys of it, and the giving them to his Apostles.*

By the *kingdom of heaven*, is certainly meant the *Church of Christ* ; The Company of Believers. Which  
is

is evidently the sense of this phrase, in more places than one of this very Gospel. XIII Matth. 2. *The kingdom of heaven is like to a Man that sowed good seed in his field ; But while men Slept the Enemy came and Sowed Tares &c.* In the *Kingdom of Heaven*, properly so called, there are no *Enemies*, nor any *Tares*: Therefore by the *Kingdom of Heaven* must be meant the Church. And so it is to be understood in all the rest of the Parables of  
of



14 The Dignity of the

of that Chapter; and in  
 XI. 11. XVIII. 1. 3. And  
 thus the Pharisees are said to  
 shut up the kingdom of heaven  
 against men (which is near  
 to the phrase of our Savi-  
 our in this place) and would  
 neither go in themselves, nor  
 suffer them that were entering  
 to go in. XXIII. 13. That  
 is, kept Men from believ-  
 ing in Christ, and becom-  
 ing members of his Church.  
 And in the same sense, an-  
 other phrase is frequently  
 used, viz. the kingdom of God.  
 XXI

XXI. Math. 41. The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you &c. that is, they should no longer be the Church of God. Which in another place is thus explained.

VIII. 11, 12. Many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: But the Children of the kingdom shall be cast out, &c. That is, Men should come from far distant Countries, and believe on Christ, when the Gospel was preached unto them

14 The Dignity of the

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them (as *Abraham* the Father of the faithful obeyed God's call, when he bad him leave *Chaldea*) and they, who till now were the only people of God, viz. The *Jews* should be no longer owned by him, but cast off for their unbelief.

II. Now what is meant by the *Keys* of this Church, will be easily understood, by observing that the Church is often called the *House of God*. III Hebr. 2, 3, 4. And that every house hath a door,

door, which lets into it, and that door is made fast and opened by the lock: Unto which *the keys* belong. The giving of which to the Apostles signifies in general, Christ's giving them a power over his family; And intrusting them with the care of those that belong to his House. And in particular it signifies, the power of a *Steward*: Whose Office is to look after every one in the family; That they both do their duty, and want nothing that is necessary

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necessary for them. This will be most manifest by consulting the XXII. *Isaiah* 20, 21, 22. from whence this Expression of our Saviour's, seems to be borrowed: Where God threatens to put *Shebna* out of his Office, and to confer it upon *Eliakim*; Who was a much better Man. I will cloath him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle. I will commit thy Government into his hand, and he shall be as a father to the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, and to the house of

of



of Judah. What that Government was, which he promised to give him, may be learnt from v. 15. Where Shebna is said, to be over the house. And accordingly it follows, after the words now mentioned, concerning Eliakim. v. 22. The key of the House of David will I lay upon his shoulder: So he shall open and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. That is, he should have the sole power of ruling the house of the King, and administer the affairs of

20 *The Dignity of the*

of the whole family ; so that he should admit into it, and exclude out of it, whom he pleased, without controul.

Such a power there is over the Church ; which Originally is in Christ himself : Who is said to *have the key of David.* III Revel. 7. that is, of the house of David. Who was pleased to communicate this power unto his Apostles ; and by them unto their Successors : Who were to confer it on such persons, as they judged  
meet

meet for this Office of Stewards in the Church of Christ; as *Eliakim* was in the Court of the King of *Judah*.

Now these words of our Blessed Saviour thus explained, sufficiently warrant us to assert, that he hath advanced his Ministers unto an high Dignity, and given them a very great power over his people, who are the Subjects of his Kingdom: that is, the members of his Church. I say, his *Ministers*; because this power was not left to one, but

B

unto

22 *The Dignity of the*  
unto them all : To be distributed among them according to their several Shares in this Office ; wherein they are placed in divers orders and degrees of power. For it being the power of *Stewards* over a large family, it is absolutely necessary that the chief Steward in it, have several others under him, to take part of the care upon them.

Now if we enquire into this power of a Steward, it is already apparent, that it consists of *three* parts.

*First,*

*First*, of admitting persons into the family.

*Secondly*, of feeding and providing for them, when they are admitted. And

*Thirdly*, of governing and keeping them in order : And, if need be, turning those out of doors who are disorderly.

They have power to open the door ; to keep and maintain in the house ; and to shut out of it. Such is the power of the Ministers

24 *The Dignity of the*

of our Lord. By them persons enter into his Church; and are there instructed; and also ruled and governed. For they are not only to use the keys to open the door, and let men into the family of God; which is done by Baptism; But when they are in, to keep and preserve them there; to set them about their work, to provide for their Welfare (as Stewards feed and cloath the family) Which Christ's Ministers do, by Catechizing, Preaching  
ing

ing, administering the holy Communion, and other duties. And they are also to turn idle, unprofitable, and drunken Servants out of the family : And upon their sincere repentance to open the door ; and admit them again into it. Not indeed by a new Baptism ; But by receiving them to the holy Communion again ; Unto which they have a right by their Baptism, upon their unfeigned repentance.



My intention is to explain to you more largely the power, and duty which belongs to you, according to this little model of it, which I have now laid before you, from which will necessarily arise, the duty of all Christian people, in relation to the Ministers of Christ, and this power intrusted with them: Which I shall represent in the Conclusion.

*Their*

*Their Office then consists in these things following.*

I.

*First, they are to Baptize into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Whereby, as I said, they let men into the Church, and make them members of it. This is the first work, in which the keys of the kingdom of*  
B 4 *heaven.*

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Heaven is employed. It is true, Preaching or Publishing the Gospel went before this, to Persons of Age; That they might learn into what they were Baptized. But then, this work was not properly performed by them, as *Stewards* of a family, or *Pastors*, or *Overseers* of a Flock (for they who were Heathens did not acknowledge that Authority in them) But as *Ministers* of Christ at large: Who were sent to invite all men to come to the *Marriage*

*riage. Feast* (as the Gospel speaks) in the house of Christ. Unto which motion when any Man consented, then he was Baptized: and that was the first exercise of the power of *the keys*, the first act of *Stewards*; Whereby they received Men into the family of our Lord Christ.

And thus it is at this day. They who are not as yet Members of the Church, do not own them as *Stewards* and *Overseers*; nor are under their care as part of

B 5 the

30 *The Dignity of the*

the family. And therefore the act of teaching such persons and instructing them in Religion is performed by them, as Ministers of the Gospel in general, not as exercising the power of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Baptism is the first part of that power, the first act of Christ's *Stewards*; whereby they open the door (as I said) and let Men into the Church: And by this Sign and Token admit them into the Service of Christ, and  
list

*Christian Priesthood.* 31

list them under his Banner.  
See *St. Cyprian* in his *LXXIII Epistle*.

If persons before they be Baptized do really believe the Gospel, and renouncing all other Masters, do in their hearts devote themselves to the Service of Christ; They become secretly and invisibly Members of his Body. But they are not openly and professedly of his family, and so under the care and charge of his Ministers; till they own Christ by  
being

32 *The Dignity of the*

being Baptized; till they receive his mark and cognizance, by which they are solemnly Initiated into his Service, and made compleat Christians. And therefore they are said, by the Ancients, then to receive their τελείωσιν ( so they called Baptism ) their *Perfection*; in comparison with the weak and imperfect State wherein they were before. For now they openly contract with Christ, and take upon them his Yoke: They bind themselves by solemn  
Vows



*Christian Priesthood.* 33

Vows to become his Servants, and to obey those whom Christ hath set in his Stead, to order the affairs of his family.

And if the persons Baptized be but Infants, they are received thereby into the care and tuition of the Church : and stand engaged to make good what is promised for them by those, who brought them to be Baptized. For they have upon them *σφραγίδα τῆς* *Kue's* the Seal and Badge of the Lord : whereby they  
are

34 *The Dignity of the*

are appropriated unto him, to be peculiarly his, and to be brought up in his Religion ; though as yet they understand nothing of it. So great hath been the Care of Christ's Church, to take Men as early as might be into her Bosom ; to gather them, as I may say, under her wings : And to commit them to the oversight and care of those, who are set over the House of God, to bring them up in his Knowledge and Love.

II.

*Secondly,* When this is done, the Ministers of Christ are to Catechise and Instruct those who are received by Baptism into his family: to teach them, as soon as they are able to learn, the Christian Faith, and to build them up in it: To feed them with the wholesome words of Sound Doctrine; to assign every one the several parts of their work; and tell them  
their

36 *The Dignity of the*

their duty in the place and Station wherein God hath set them.

For this was another part of a *Stewards* Office; to take care that such as belonged to the Family, wanted nothing that was necessary for them. Now nothing is more necessary in the Church, than Christian Instruction. Whence *St. Paul* among many other qualifications of a Bishop which he, mentions in *1 Tim. III.* saith he must be, *didaxinos* apt to teach, we

we Translate it. . Which signifies both his abilities, and his propensity to this Work. And in the I *Titus* 9. he saith, he must hold fast the faithful word that he hath been taught, that he may be able by Sound Doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers. Whereby it appears, there are many parts of this duty, upon which I cannot particularly insist. They are first to instruct in the principles of Christian Religion: And 2<sup>dly</sup>, to exhort and perswade  
men

38 *The Dignity of the*

men to the practice of it, both by their Doctrines and Examples ; and 3<sup>dly</sup>, to reprove those who walk disorderly, and not according to the Rules of the Gospel: 4<sup>thly</sup>, to convince such as gainsay any of the Truths of the Gospel. And 5<sup>thly</sup>, to call men off from Vain Questions and unprofitable Enquiries, that they may attend their necessary, and unquestionable duty. III *Titus* 8. 9. And the truth is, this was the ancient manner of Preaching, to  
Excite

Excite men to some Vertue,  
or Reprehend some Vice:  
As any one may see in St.  
*Chrysoftom's* Sermons especially. Who after he hath  
expounded some portion of  
Scripture, according to  
the plain and literal mean-  
ing, doth not raise such  
Observations, as we now  
take the Liberty to do, ac-  
cording to every Man's  
judgment; but presently  
falls into an Exhortation to  
the exercise of Temperance,  
or Humility, or Charity,  
according as the portion of  
Scripture,



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Scripture, and the needs of his Auditors required. And their other Sermons upon Festival Days, were only to clear the Mystery of our Saviour's Incarnation, Death, or Resurrection, &c. and to recommend as an Example, the Actions and Sufferings of such Persons, as had been esteemed Saints in the Church. Which tended much to the keeping unnecessary Disputes out of the Church, and making Men more Humble and less Contentious. But this by the way. Let

Let it here be observed,  
That both these Powers, of  
*Baptizing*, and *Teaching*,  
were given to them before  
the Power of being *Apostles*,  
*viz.* immediately before our  
Saviour's Ascension to Hea-  
ven; Read XXVIII *Matth.*  
19, 20. And therefore these  
are Powers still inherent in  
some Persons; who were  
to succeed the Apostles, not  
in their extraordinary, but  
in their ordinary Office.  
Which Observation con-  
futes those who take upon  
them to Preach and Instruct  
others,

42 *The Dignity of the*

others, without Authority from the Bishops of the Church ; restraining this passage which gave such a Power unto their Persons, as Apostles. Who they imagine could assign none to this Office, nor commit this Power unto others which was given them ; that so they may the better assert that there are no Persons now in the World to Appoint others unto this Employment, and to deliver to them those Keys, which Christ gave them when

*Christian Priesthood.* 43

when he spoke those words ;  
because there are now no  
Apostles among us. But  
mark what he saith in the  
conclusion of those words,  
*And, behold, I am with you alway  
even unto the end of the world.*  
Which can neither be meant  
of their single Persons, nor  
of all Christians in general :  
But of those who should  
succeed them , and have  
this Power committed by  
them into their hands.

## III.

A *Third* part of their Office, is to Administer the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord, unto those who are thus instructed and have learned Christ. This is another part of the Food which the *Stewards* are to prepare, and give to Christ's Family; and is, indeed, the noblest Provision that is in the Churches Store-house; the highest Entertainment of the

the People of God. Which therefore is not presently given them at their first entrance, but reserved for them till they be confirmed in the state of Christianity; and be able to taste and relish the nature of it, to digest it, and turn it into their nourishment. And this is likewise an action, whereby the several Members of the Family do more strongly tie themselves to Christ, and give him fresh assurances of their Love: As he assures them of his.

C

Of

46 *The Dignity of the*

Of this it is not proper, for me now to enlarge, because my Business at present, is only to shew that this is part of the power which Christ hath given to his Ministers; and to them only: Who alone can Consecrate the Bread and Wine, and give the Body and Blood of Christ to the faithful. Which power was given to them before he died, just at his last Supper: In the end of which he instituted the Sacrament, when he said; *do this in remembrance*



*brance of me, XXII Luke*  
19.

Here it is to be diligently observed that these words, *do this in remembrance of me*, are but twice to be found in the New Testament: Though the Institution of this Sacrament be mentioned there four times. For the first three Evangelists and St. Paul speak of its Institution: But St. Luke only, and St. Paul have these words; and that to different purposes, to shew what every one's work and

C 2

duty

48     *The Dignity of the*  
duty is. All Christians are  
bound to Commemorate  
the Love of their Lord and  
Master in this manner, and  
to *shew forth his death till he*  
*come.* And therefore in the  
1 *Corinth. XI. 24.* the words  
run thus, *take, eat, this is my*  
*body which was broken for you;*  
*do this in remembrance of me.*  
Where these two words, *do*  
*this*, manifestly refer to  
*take, eat*, which go before:  
And therefore they express  
the Duty of Christian peo-  
ple. But now in the other  
place of the Gospel of St.  
*Luke,*

Christian Priesthood. 49

Luke, there is no mention of *taking* and *eating*, but the words run thus, *He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it to them, saying; this is my body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.* Where it is evident these words *do this*, can refer to nothing but what goes before, *he took bread, gave thanks, brake it, and gave it*: And therefore as the former place directs what the people should do, so this directs what the Pastors are to do. They

C 3 are

50 *The Dignity of the*

are to take bread, bless it, break it, and give it : And the people are to take it and to eat it.

And as these words are plainly spoken to them, so they are spoken before his death : And therefore before they received the power of Apostleship. And consequently they belong to all his Ministers , unto the Worlds end : Who alone can consecrate Bread and Wine, to become the Body and Blood of Christ ; unto those that devoutly receive them. All

All these *three* powers, of which I have hitherto treated, we find expressly given them in the Holy Scripture: And another there is (which I shall mention in the Conclusion) which is as expressly delivered to them, as these. But there are some other intermedial powers, between these and that: Which though not particularly mentioned by our Saviour; yet are partly contained in those already named.

## IV.

*Fourthly*, therefore, they are to pray with and for the Family; and to Bless them in the Name of the Lord. We have the Institution of *St. Paul*, for their praying for the Family of Christ and for all Men. *1 Tim. II. 1.* After he had bidden *Timothy* in the 19<sup>th</sup> verse of the foregoing Chapter, to war a good Warfare among his Flock, and to keep the Faith, and a good Conscience

science in the discharge of his Ministry: As a way and means to this he thus prescribes, *I exhort therefore that first of all, Supplications, Prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all Men: For Kings, and for all that are in Authority, &c.* Where the Word *πρωτον*, *first of all*, is remarkable: Denoting these to be principal parts of the Priests Office. And as for Blessing the People, we have the same Apostles Example in the Conclusion of every *Epistle*:



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But especially in the last Verse of the Second to the *Corinthians*, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*

And here two things are to be Noted.

*First*, That though every Christian ought to Pray, and that continually, both for himself and others ; yet the Ministers of Christ only Pray as Persons separate unto this Office. All Christi-  
ans

*Christian Priesthood.* 55

ans are said to be *made Priests* unto God; but not by Office; not as Men deputed to such a Ministry of Praying for others. God invites all that belong to Christ, to come with boldness to the Throne of Grace: Being admitted to a greater familiarity with him, than the *Jews* were in former times; who prayed in the outward Court only, at a distance from the Sanctuary. Yet there are some Persons who are more nearly related to him, being properly

56 *The Dignity of the*  
properly *Priests* : who are  
set apart by him to offer up  
Prayers, Supplications, and  
Intercessions for others.  
Which we cannot but think  
are of great Efficacy, when  
they seriously attend unto  
this duty ; because they  
are appointed by God, to  
this Office. And

*Secondly*, Their Prayers  
are then of most Efficacy,  
when they Celebrate the  
Sacrament of Christ's Body  
and Blood, It being a great  
part of their Work at that  
time ; to represent unto  
God

God the Meritorious Sacrifice which his Blessed Son made for our Sins ; and by Vertue of it to Beg of him all Spiritual Blessings. For then they imitate Christ's Intercession in the Heavens : And do that on Earth, by way of representation ; Which he doth, by presenting himself in the presence of God for us, in the High and Holy Place above. Where he exhibits the Sacrifice of himself before God ; and so interceeds for us : Which they also here upon Earth

58 *The Dignity of the*

Earth commemorate ; and Exhibiting the same, under the Form of Bread and Wine, Send up their Prayers with this Representation ; for all the Blessings for which he intercedes in Heaven. They shew to God all that Christ hath suffered ; by presenting before him his Body broken, and his Blood shed : And by Vertue of that Sacrifice their Prayers , at that time , become the more prevalent.

V. They

V.

They are also to direct, advise, and guide the People of God, by Spiritual conference with them : The *Ministers* of God being of Counsel for the Soul, as *Lawyers* are for Mens Estates, and *Physitians* for their Bodies. So that to them Men ought to resort ; that they may be better acquainted with their Duty ; satisfied in their Doubts ; resolved in difficult Cases ;  
and

60    *The Dignity of the*  
and assisted against the  
Temptations which they  
find too strong for them.  
For though many general  
advices may be given from  
the Pulpit ; yet no one can  
meet there with every pri-  
vate Man's Malady. And  
therefore this Office of per-  
sonal Instruction, as occasi-  
on requires, seems to be  
comprehended in the gene-  
ral power given God's Mi-  
nisters, of *teaching* all men,  
and *building them up in their*  
*most Holy Faith.*

These



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These words of the *Apostle* are very significant, XIII *Heb.* 17. where they are said to *Watch for mens Souls*: That is, to be ready to embrace all Opportunities they meet with of doing them good; which must be by more than publick Instruction. And they are also said to be ὁδηγοί, *Guides* to the Flocks: Which they cannot be, without acquaintance with them, and with their State. And indeed, their being made *Stewards*, by giving them the Keys of the Kingdom  
of

62 *The Dignity of the*

of Heaven, implies as much: That they should be acquainted, as much as is possible, with every one of the Family, over whom they are set.

VI.

They are also to assist the Sick; by helping them to search into their Consciences, and find out the diseases of their Souls; and particularly what Sin they may possibly labour under, for which the Sickness of their

their Body, may prove a proper Cure. They are to receive their Confessions ; to direct them unto the best Remedies for removing their bad Affections ; to exhort, persuade and comfort them, according as their Condition requires. No Man that understands our Religion, will think it strange, that I say, they are to receive the Sick Man's Confession ; for St. James saith the same, V. 14, 15, 16. *If he have committed sins , ( speaking of a Sick Man )*  
*they*

# 64 The Dignity of the

they shall be forgiven him, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ, Absolution shall be given him; and therefore Confession must precede it. But to put all out of doubt, he adds in the next words, Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another; that ye may be healed. Two things it is evident he speaks of; the forgiving of ἁμαρτίας, Sins and Transgressions against God; and the forgiving of ὀρθοπρωμίαι, Faults, which are lesser Crimes and Trespases against Men. Now  
in

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in the latter Case, it may be sufficient that we confess one to another ; that is, to the Party offended, who the Apostle saith should pray to God for Healing ; *i. e.* that he would not lay his offence to his charge. But in the former Case he was to confess to the Elders of the Church ; whom he is there commanded to call for ; that they may Pray over him, and obtain Healing and Reconciliation for him.

There

## 66 *The Dignity of the*

There are other acts of their Office, which I shall not now mention, because I would only name the Chief.

### VII.

They are then to Exclude Men out of the Christian Society, when all other means fail, which Christ hath appointed to make them good Christians. When *Preaching*, when *private Admonitions*, and *Reproofs*; when all other good Offices will

will not make them true to Christ, and live orderly in his House ; then they who had the Power of opening the door, and taking them into his Family, have Power to cast them out, and shut the door against them. This is called *Binding* them, in the words after those I am explaining: As Men are wont to do idle and false Servants, who are delivered to the House of Correction, to be punished for their faults. This is the very last, and greatest Power



68 · *The Dignity of the*

Power they have for Mens  
Reformation.

And here it is to be observed, That this Power, together with that which follows, was given by Christ to his Ministers, as I noted in the beginning, before his Ascension to Heaven : And therefore doth not belong to them as Apostles, which they were not made till the Day of Pentecost, but as Pastors of the Church, Stewards of Christ's Household ; which  
came

came down to their Successors in that Office.

But it is farther to be noted that the whole of this power is not in every particular Minister; but only so much of it, as they by whom they were Ordained to their Office, bestowed upon them. Now if you consider the whole process against a Profane Person, you will easily see how much every particular Minister of Christ, can challenge to himself of this power. He is first to be  
D admonish-

70 *The Dignity of the*

admonished; and *then* to be sharply rebuked, if admonitions do no good: And these duties ought to be performed by private Christians, as well as by Ministers. But then *thirdly*, he is to be debarred of the privileges of the rest of Christian People, for some time, to see if he will repent and amend. And this is in the power of every particular Minister of Christ; committed to him by the Successors of the Apostles at his ordination. And *then* follows

follows the thrusting him out of the Family, till he repent, and return to his Obedience: Which is such a censure as is not to be pass'd by any single person, without the assistance of others. For it is the Sentence of a Judge, in such a weighty concernment; that it is only in the power of a Court, being an act of Judgment, and heavy condemnation.

## VIII.

*Lastly*, They are to absolve the Penitent : that is, such as acknowledge their Sins, and reform their Lives. Unto whom they are to open the door again, and let them once more into the Christian Society. Not by a new Baptism ; but by a solemn absolution , and pronouncing them in the State wherein they were before their Exclusion. And this is called *loosing*, in the words

words following these I am explaining : Untying the former Bond, and taking off the Punishment inflicted. Which power is lodged in the same hands, that exercised the former. They that laid on the load, can only take it off.

There is indeed another sort of *absolution*, or acquitting ; which in certain cases, is in the power of every particular Minister of Jesus Christ : I will mention *two* which our Church, and the Church of God every  
D 3 where

74 *The Dignity of the*  
where hath always approv-  
ed.

*First*, In case of great de-  
jection of Spirit, which any  
pious Soul labours under.  
If upon laying open the  
State of that Soul, and a  
serious survey of it, and  
comparing it with the rule  
of the Gospel, it be found  
to be faithful unto Christ;  
he that Ministers unto it in  
Christ's Name, ought not  
only to apply Comfort to  
it, but more than that;  
pronounce a pardon to it,  
and



and assure it of God's grace and favour. Which cannot but be of great use, and afford much satisfaction and confidence to troubled Spirits : When one that can neither be suspected of ignorance, nor of partiality, but is wise and holy; shall pronounce its condition to be safe, according to the word of God.

*Secondly,* In time of Sickness and approaching Death, a good man who hath given Testimony of a sincere repentance in his Life time,

D 4. and

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and behaved himself Religiously in the Family of Christ, will receive no small addition of hope of future happiness, from the Judgment of a faithful Minister of Christ: Who knowing the State of his Soul, and manner of Life ~~that~~ shall absolve him from his Sins, in the name of Christ.

I confess, they who are prophane and dissolute in their health, who live without God, and without a due regard to men; following their own Lusts and  
Desires;

Desires ; though they shew some signs of sorrow and hatred of their Sins on their Death Bed , yet they are otherwise to be dealt withal. There is no reason they should be absolved ; that is, pronounced pardoned, and in a safe condition : For as they never Lived well, so no body can tell, what they will do, If they should be restored to health again. It must be their punishment, for beginning so late, that they go out of the World in a doubtful com-

D 5      dition.

dition ; without such a great Blessing of the Church, as that of Absolution is; Which belongs to those who have overcome Temptations; and conquered the Devil, the World and the Flesh : Which no man can do upon his death bed, because he hath no opportunities. We cannot but conclude well of those who do well, when they had Temptations to do otherwise : But as for those who only resolve to do well, when they have no Temptation to do evil ;  
what-

whatsoever hope we may have of them, we can conclude nothing certainly. They ought not to despair ; but we can give them no assurance of God's Mercy.

A Faithful *Steward* of the mysteries of Christ, must make a difference between those that behave themselves according to the rules of the Gospel ; and those that live disorderly in Christ's Family. He cannot honestly dispense our Saviour's Blessing alike to all. They that all their Life have resisted

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sisted the exhortations and admonitions of the Church, despised her invitations, and intreaties, and reproof, and all other remedies; must not think to be taken all on a sudden into her very Bosom: But be content to depart the World in an uncertain condition; only with earnest Prayers for them; and recommendations of them to the infinite Mercies of God in Christ Jesus. Who knows their hearts, and whether their resolutions of amendment  
were

were well grounded, and would have held out in a time of trial; and accordingly will dispose of them.

Thus I have briefly explained to you the power Christ hath given to his Ministers, by committing to them the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*. Which are words of a very lofty Sound; but of no less signification. From the Explication of which; you cannot but learn both your *Dignity*, and your *Duty*.  
You



You ought to think it the greatest honour in the World to serve the Lord Christ in this Office. However men are pleased to esteem you; look upon yourselves as advanced to the highest end noblest Preferment. With which you ought not to be puffed up, but to demean yourselves in it with the humblest Reverence; because it is a very great and sacred trust. And therefore ought to fill you with Solemn thoughts, how to discharge it, to the Satisfaction

tisfaction of your Lord and Master : So that you may neither dishonour him, nor your Office by performing it negligently ; but with an hearty Affection and true Zeal to his Service. Who, as I said, hath conferred the highest Honour upon you ; but accompanied with a very weighty trust : Which he expects you should honestly discharge. He hath honoured you with the Office of *Stewards*, in his House and Family ;  
which

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which is the Kingdom of Heaven : And it is required of Stewards, ( as St. Paul teacheth us, 1 Corinth. IV. 2. ) that a man be found faithful. Let none of us then ; My Brethren, ever prove false to our great and gracious Lord by not attending to our Office : But give all diligence, both to understand it, and to perform the duties belonging to it, with all fidelity.

Consider what manner of Persons they ought to be above all other Men, in all  
*holy*

*holy conversation and godliness:*  
who have a work of such  
importance, of such large  
extent, incumbent on them.  
How Watchful, how Stu-  
dious, how Industrious and  
Careful they ought to be,  
to make use of the Keys of  
the Kingdom of Heaven,  
wherewith they are intrust-  
ed, unto the ends and pur-  
poses for which they are  
committed to them. I will  
not enlarge this Treatise by  
pressing upon you every  
particular part of your Du-  
ty ; but only in general be-  
seech

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seech you to be so solicitous in the discharge of them all ; that the People may be convinced of the Truths I have now represented to you ; and understand that you are employed in an Office, both of great Authority, and of great Labour.

There are many of them who have so little knowledge of these matters, that they commonly say, Ministers lead a lazy Life, and have their Maintenance for nothing : When the truth is,

is, the People themselves are too willing to ease them of a great deal of their Pains. They would not have them do all their Work; for they will not put themselves to the trouble of going to them for any private Advice; nor be at leisure to hear all their Admonitions, and Instructions, and Reproofs. Let those therefore know (by some means or other) who are apt to undervalue their Labours; saying, it is but stepping up into the  
Pulpit

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Pulpit twice a Week, and making an hours Discourse; that it is their own fault if their Labour be not far greater; by having daily Prayers, and more frequent Communion, and giving personal Instructions. Pray them to give you opportunities to perform every part of your Office; and they will soon see it is not  Calling; but there is Employment enough, and also Care, and great Thoughts of Heart about it; which deserve the highest



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est Encouragement. Pray them to begin to have some care of their Souls, and they will find it necessary to come to you for personal Direction; or to let you come to them. Desire them to be at leisure, at seasonable times, that you may take an account of their Practice, and of their Profiting. Let them desire to be informed in what they do not understand; to use you as the Physicians of their Souls; as the Keepers of the House  
of

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of God, who are to give every one their portion in due season : And then they will discern the Work is very great ; and calls for Skill and Faithfulness, Diligence and Patience.

And how is it possible the People should not see , if they attend to these things, how *highly they ought to esteem them in love for their works sake*, as St. Paul exhorts, *1 Thesß. V. 13.* and obey those that have the rule over them and submit themselves, as his words are

XIII *Hebr.* 17. But if I should pursue such things as they deserve, I must make another little Treatise for the *People*, to acquaint them with their Duty; as I have made this for you that are *Priests*. Who having the care of them, I shall leave it to you, on fitting occasions, to represent to them, what regard ought to be paid to the Ministers of Christ.

And omitting many other things, I shall only mention that which is most per-

continent and agreeable to my present Subject. Which is, that the *Stewards* of Christ being the governours of his Family, every one of that Family ought to be ruled by them: And submit to their Authority in such things as they decree to be fit and Expedient, for the keeping the house of God in good order. For that is, without all doubt, another part of the power of those to whom Christ hath committed the care of his Family, in chief; to make  
such

such rules as to them shall seem most meet, for the regular and seemly performance of all religious duties in his Church: *Let all things* (saith St. Paul) *be done decently, and in order.* 1 *Corinth. XIV. 40.*

All things he means, that I treated of before, are to be so performed; that they do not fall into contempt, and all confusion be avoided.

The *Stewards* of Christ therefore are to take care that Baptism, and Prayers, and the Holy Communion,  
E and

and all the rest, be administered in such a manner, that there want nothing to the due solemnity of such sacred actions. The actions and Offices themselves Christ hath appointed, not they. But the manner of their performance, as to time, place, gesture, habit, and such like things, is not appointed by Christ, nor can be the same in all ages, and Countries; but is left to their Discretion. That this then may be done with all gravity, and in the most comely

comely and edifying manner, they are to prescribe rules, and make orders: Unto which every one that is under their charge, ought in conscience to submit himself.

I know it is become a question with too many, whether they have such a power or no. This is a point which will not go down with those, who look upon all laws as too great an abridgment of their liberty: And upon all governors as so many Enemies,

E 2                      that



that would dispoil them of their own will and pleasure, which is very dear to them. And so they rather chuse to throw all things into confusion, though they themselves be undone thereby; than submit to be ordered by any one else, but according as they themselves judg convenient.

I will assist you therefore briefly to prove the Authority of Church Governours, to bind the people to such rules as they think fit to make; for the preserving order

order and decency among them.

I. And here in the *first* place, let this be premised, which no body can deny ; that there are some things, which, for the time being, are very decent in themselves ; and others very unbecoming. And therefore since common reason tells us, that nothing is to be managed with more solemnity and gravity than the Service of Almighty God ; such things are to be chosen in the performance of it, as

E 3      will

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will preserve its honour and dignity ; and such avoided as will expose it to contempt : Upon which account we may observe some things ordained by the Law of *Moses* ; for which no other reason can be given, but only this ; that there might not be any undecency in the worship of God, that then was. I will give two instances ; which the *Jews* themselves have noted. The holy things of which none but the Priests might eat, were appointed to be eaten

eaten in the Holy place, and no where else ; and likewise they were ordered to be eaten on the same day they were offered, and not kept till the morrow. For no other cause , saith R. *Levi ben Gersom*, but that the Sacrifices might appear more glorious and magnificent : And that they might not fall into contempt by being carried into private houses ; nor create any loathing in the Priests, by being too long reserved. Thus likewise the *Ephod* is ordered to

be bound at the top, round about the hole of it ; that it might not be in danger to be rent. XXVIII *Exod.* 32.

The reason of which was, saith the same Author, because laceration, or rending, is a very ill-favoured and unbecoming thing; though it be but in the extremity of a Garment, for it signifies that thing which is torn, to be tending to decay. Since things therefore were then appointed, according to the natural sense of Mankind, merely  
for

for this end and no other ;  
that what belonged to the  
Service of God might not  
be despised, nor seem vile  
in the Eyes of the people :  
This is not to be neglected  
now, but care taken of such  
decency, as may gain a re-  
spect and reverence to what  
is done in the Church, or  
Family of God.

II. This being premised,  
let it be further considered  
that our Lord himself hath  
nowhere appointed such  
things ; and therefore he  
hath left them to be order-

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ed by the wisdom of somebody else. He hath nowhere, for instance, told us, in what Habit the Sacrifice of Prayer and Thanksgiving should be offered; nor in what manner we should Eat of the Holy things; that is, receive the Holy Communion of his Body and Blood: And therefore provision must be made by those who have Authority from him, that these and all other Services in his Church, be so performed, that they be not rendered



rendered despicable and mean in the Eyes of the World.

— III. And this is very apparent by the Holy Scriptures, that in the Family of Christ, all Persons are not equal ; but some are said to *preside*, to *rule*, to *be over* the rest ; who are required to *submit*, and be *subject*, and *obey*. Which is a clear demonstration, that these things are not to be put to the Vote, and carried by the major part of Voices in the Church :  
But

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But are to be appointed and determined by the Leaders and Governours; unto whom the rest are to yield their consent.

IV. From whence it plainly follows, that if they be to Govern, and the People to obey; then there must be some Laws and Rules made, without which there can be no Government, nor any Obedience.

V. And again I observe in the Scripture, that the  
Autho-

Authority of these Rulers was so great, that there was danger they might abuse it, by troubling the Church with unnecessary Observances. Else why Should St. Peter caution those whom he requires to feed, and take the oversight of the Flock of God, not to carry themselves, as lords over God's heritage: That is, to use their Power moderately, 1 Pet. V. 3. This had been a very impertinent advice, if they had had no Power at all. How  
was

was it possible for them to lord it over the Flock, if they could command them nothing?

VI. And then again observe, That this Admonition is not directed to the People, but to the *Elders* themselves. He doth not call upon the Flock to see that their Rulers did not lord it over them; and to curb and check the Power of their Elders, if it grew exorbitant; but he requires the Elders themselves to take  
care

care of this ; that they did not domineer , by commanding any thing for their meer will and pleasure , lest their Power proved grievous to their People.

Upon these grounds, and twenty other things I could name , the Ministers of Christ are to call upon their people to yield obedience to the appointments of the Governours of his Church, in matters of decency and order ; which do not manifestly cross the appointments

ments of Christ himself: They are the fittest Judges of such things; and indeed there can be no other. For the people, having every one peculiar fancies, will never agree about such matters: Which must therefore be regulated by their guides, unto whose Godly Judgments they all ought to submit.

And if any one ask where Christ hath given them such authority, let them know that it is manifestly included, if the Scriptures

tures be rightly understood, in those words of his, before his Ascension unto St. Peter, Ποιμανε, *feed my Sheep*, XXI John 16. For to *feed* signifies not only to instruct and teach; but also govern and make laws and orders. The words of the *Psalmist concerning David*, are sufficient to prove this: *God took him from the sheep-folds, from following the Ewes great with young, (i. e. from taking care to order them so, that they did not miscarry) to F E E D Jacob his people,*



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*people, and Israel his inheri-*  
*tance. So he FED them ac-*  
*cording to the integrity of his*  
*heart; and guided them by the*  
*skilfulness of his hand,*  
*LXXVIII. Psal. 70, 71, 72.*  
*That is, he governed them*  
*with great Justice, and sin-*  
*cere study of their Happi-*  
*ness: and exercised his pow-*  
*er so, as was most for their*  
*benefit.*

Neither was this power  
given to St. Peter alone, but  
our Saviour tells them all,  
they should sit on Twelve  
Thrones, (XIX. Mat. 28.)  
that

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that is, rule and govern his people, as persons having authority over them. And that they did not exercise this power merely as Apostles, or Men extraordinarily called, but that it was common to all future Governours of the Church, appears by St. Peter's own words to the Elders in the place before mentioned, 1. Pet. V. 2. *FEED the flock of God that is among you, &c.* That is, rule and govern them: but do it discreetly: not as absolute Lords and Kings in  
the

the Church (for that the word *Feed*, and *Shepherd* anciently imported) but as Ministers, and Stewards, and those that must give an account of their management.

This power hath ever been thought to be in the Church, since that time: and the Bishops Chair hath been call'd by Ecclesiastical Writers, his *Throne* (in allusion, I suppose, to those words of our Saviour) he together with his Presbyters  
(who

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(who are call'd Priests & *δευτέρω θρόνῳ*, of a second Throne, or Chair) being to order all Affairs in the Church, with such prudence and integrity as *David* did the Affairs of his Kingdom.

Nor can those words of our blessed Saviour, XX *Matth. 25.* be justly alledged, as a barr to the exercise of such a power; where he saith, *the Princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.*

*them. But it shall not be so among you : But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister, &c. For first, you may be sure, that our Lord could not contradict himself : Who had told his Apostles in the Chapter foregoing, that they should sit upon Twelve Thrones, judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel. And therefore secondly, we may be sure he doth not, by this clause in their Patent, divest them of all power to make rules and orders for his people :*

people: Which would have been to make them like so many golden images in the Church; or like a Statue of a Prince on a Throne, that hath no life, breath, or motion: No, it is evident even by these very words, that a great power is acknowledged to be committed to them; but our Saviour was afraid it might tempt them to pride and insolent behaviour: as if they were such Princes as then ruled the World. And therefore his meaning is, that

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that he would not have them look upon themselves as having only a dignity conferred on them ; but a duty also incumbent upon them. He would have them remember, they were not absolute Lords and Masters ; but Ministers and Stewards : Who were not to use their power, as the Princes of this World are wont to do, merely for their own pleasure and greatness ; but for the good, and benefit, and comfort of his Church. In one word,



word, he would have them know that they ought to exercise their Authority, not to serve any private end of their own, but to promote the common good of all. So that the greater any of them was, the greater obligation lay upon him, to make his greatness profitable and serviceable, not burdensom and troublesom to his People.

These things being evident and clear, if they be duly represented to your  
F People ;

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People ; you may hope  
they are prepared to receive  
the exhortation of the holy  
Apostle 1 Pet. V. 5.  
*Ye youngers, submit your selves  
to the Elders. i. e. Ye that  
are Learners in the School  
of Christ, yield unto those  
that teach and govern you :  
And do not oppose your  
fancies unto their judgment.  
Obey those that have the rule  
over you , and submit your  
selves : For they watch for  
your Souls, as they that must  
give account, that they may do  
it with joy, and not with grief ;  
for*

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*for that is unprofitable for you.* XIII Hebr. 17. Where I take those words, *that they may do it with joy*, to refer unto their ruling and watchfulness : Of which they must one day give an account; and then also relate how their People have behaved themselves towards them. Who ought to consider that, in the meantime, their burden is great enough in doing their duty (if they conscientiously attend it) and that they ought not to have this ad-

ditional trouble, that their People are refractory, and will not yield to what is reasonably required of them. Study how to make your People sensible of this, that they ought to endeavour the ease and the comfort of their Governours; that they may follow their employment with gladfom, and not with heavy hearts, groaning, as it were under a load. For this, as it will be grievous to them; so it will be unprofitable to their People. It will grieve them  
them

them to take a great deal of pains without any profit, or so much as thanks: And on the other side, it will provoke God's Wrath against the People for their disobedience: Which will be far more grievous than any of their Rulers Orders. In short, whether their Place and Office be considered; or their solicitude and care; or the account they must give of their Peoples demeanour, as well as of their own: Or the comfort it will be to them;

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or the profit it will be to the People: All these persuade them to be obedient, and submit themselves to those who have the rule of them, and watch for their Souls.

And if any still hang back, and be unwilling to conform themselves to their Orders; desire them to consider these two things, with which I shall conclude this Discourse.

*First,*

*First,* The ground of their unwillingness.

*Secondly,* The danger and sad Effects thereof.

I.

Beseech them to examine strictly, whether their unwillingness to obey in things enjoined by the authority of the Church (and I may add the State too) do not arise more out of prejudice than any rea-

F 4 son ;



124 *The Dignity of the*

son ; from custom and contrary usage, rather than clear conviction of the unlawfulness of that which is enjoined. This I believe, will be found to be the truth. There are no reasons weighty enough to be put into the ballance against those which I have alledged. They are only light Suspitions, vain surmises and fears of Superstition which keep men from conforming: When it is most manifestly down-right Superstition, to boggle at that  
which

*Christian Priesthood.* 125

which God hath no where forbidden. And it is the absurdest thing in the world to imagine, that they whom Christ hath set to rule his Church, whose business it is to Study to keep good order in it ; should not understand what is most decent and becoming ; what most edifying and profitable ; what will most conduce to maintain , promote, credit and honour our Religion. Which cannot stand, if a greater regard be not paid to those

F 5      who

126 *The Dignity of the*  
who are the main supporters  
of it.

## II.

That's the other thing  
which ought to be represented  
to them, the mischievous  
effects of disobedience ;  
which may incline them  
to use all diligence for  
their satisfaction. A grievous  
rent is hereby made in  
the Family of Christ :  
His Religion is disgraced :  
The Governors of his Church  
are disheartened

ned and discouraged: The Enemies of it are gratified: And in fine, Government plainly subverted. For *where there is envying and strife, as St. James saith III. 16. there is confusion, and every evil work.* These are the natural consequences, of disobedience: Besides the just judgments of God, who is wont to punish this sin with worse evils, than thereby Men seek to avoid.

When

## 128 *The Dignity of the*

When *Korah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*, rebell'd against the Government of *Moses* and *Aaron*; and refused to pay that Respect which was due to those who ruled in Church and State. *The Sun and the Moon* (saith *R. Elieser* in his *Pirke*) went to God, and said, that they could shine no longer, if these Men were suffer'd, as not being able to look upon such Monsters. His meaning is, that Heaven cannot endure disorderly Persons; that the World cannot stand if they be not punish-

punished ; and God who is *not the author of confusion, but of peace* (as St. Paul speaks) will certainly chastise them ; and sometimes destroys them. Now what Judgment is there more suitable to the offence, than to deliver such unruly people , into the cruel paws of enraged, imbittered, and merciless Governours ; and suffer those to domineer over them , who will not be their Lords meerly, but plain Tyrants ? Because they would not live voluntarily

tarily in peaceable subjection, God lets them fall under such a force, that they shall enjoy no peace, but such as the Stones have, which are not able to knock one against another.

God of his infinite mercy prevent such a conclusion of our perverseness, which an holy grave Learned Writer of this Church in the beginning of the last Ceentury left upon Record, as his fear and dread. For after a discourse to shew that there is no better means  
to



to keep the Popish Yoke from us, than a due esteem of our Spiritual Governours, and being guided by them; he adds these words, which I shall Abridge: *Questionless, this malapert scoffing disobedience against all Ecclesiastical Power, now professed by all sorts among us, is that which to all that know God's judgments, cries louder in the ears of the Almighty (louder by much than the Prayers of Monks and Jesuits) for vengeance upon this Land. For vengeance to be executed by no other*

132    *The Dignity of the*

*other than those our sworn enemies, to be executed by no other grievances, than the doubling of the enraged Romanists Iron yoke, which is now prepared for us, ten times more heavy, than that which our forefathers have born.*

Blessed be God, who hath not yet taken this vengeance on us; tho' this heavy Iron yoke (as he justly calls it) was about to be put upon our Necks, if God had not broken it in pieces by an unexpected & wonderful deliverance. For which we  
have

have not been so thankful,  
as to have a good ground  
of hope, that he who hath  
delivered, will still deliver  
us; but quite contrary, just  
reason to fear the appa-  
rent danger we are now  
in, of falling into the hands  
of those inveterate enemies,  
by the strange increase of  
their united power, and by  
our unaccountable Quarrels  
and Divisions among our  
selves. For what that great  
Man said of his days, I  
think is true<sup>er</sup> now, Sure, if  
there be degrees of malignan-  
cy

# 134 The Dignity of the

cy in *Hellish Ghosts*, the most potent factions of those evil spirits, strive for glory by doing the greatest mischief in this Land. The condition of which if it were duly considered, common interest, it might be expected, should tye and combine those together, whom love and charity cannot yet reconcile. This hath had power to bring enemies together; is it not a strange thing then, that it doth not unite Neighbours and Friends! We read in XXII. Numb. 7. that  
the

the Elders of *Moab*, and the Elders of *Midian* went together unto *Balaam* to desire his help. These, according to the *Jewish* Tradition, were great Enemies: How came they then now to be Friends? Hear a Story, saith the *Sanhedrim*:  
“ Two Dogs were at difference, and there came  
“ a Wolf and setting upon  
“ one of them, was like  
“ to overcome him. Then  
“ stept in the other Dog,  
“ saying to himself, I had  
“ best help my enemy, and  
“ joyn

136 *The Dignity of the*

“ joyn with him against  
“ this Beast, who is a worse  
“ enemy to me than he;  
“ and will have the more  
“ courage to set upon me,  
“ when he hath devoured  
“ him. You know how  
to apply it. When there is  
a common danger, whatsoever  
private differences we  
have, we should joyn as  
close as we can together;  
and not by holding little  
things very fast, let go all  
we have. It is an ill time  
to fall out with the Master  
of

of a Ship, when a Pirate is coming to Board it; and for Soldiers to mutiny against their General, when the opposite Army stands in Battalia, and is ready to give the Charge. And it is no less dangerous for people to be finding fault, with the Orders of their Governours, when there are those at hand, that are ready to destroy what we like, as well as what we dislike in them.

2 Tim.



138 The Dignity, &c.

2 Tim. II. 7. Consider  
what I say, and the LORD  
give you understanding in all  
things.

---

20 MA 59

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

P. II. l. 4. r. receive Power.  
P. 64. l. 15. r. παραμύματα.  
P. 76. l. 9. d. that.  
P. 133. l. penult. r. is truer now.

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A N  
EXHORTATION  
TO THE  
Clergy of *ELC*.

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A  
EXHIBITION



A N  
EXHORTATION  
Sent to the  
CLERGY  
OF THE  
Diocese of *EL Y.*

---

By *Patrick* S T M O N Lord Bishop  
of *EL Y.*

---

Before his Fifth Triennial  
Visitation, MDCCIV.

---

L O N D O N:  
Printed for ~~Ri.~~ Chiswell, at the Rose and  
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EXHIBITION

Set to the

CLEER GY

O F T H E



By ST. M. V. Lord Bishop  
of E. I. I.

Before his High Tribunal  
Vindictio, MDCCLIV.

and for his High Tribunal in the year  
of the Lord 1704.



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*An Exhortation to the  
Clergy of ELY.*

*Dear Brethren,*

**T**H E late Terrible  
Storm of Wind hath  
made such a deep Impres-  
sion upon me, that as I  
cannot put it out of my  
Mind; so it seems to call  
upon me to desire others  
to keep in mind such a  
Dreadful Instance, as I ac-

A 3          count

2      *An Exhortation to*

count it , of the Divine Displeasure.

It was certainly the Voice of God ; and therefore it concerns us highly to hearken to it , and consider what it spake to us from God. For which Reason I have waved such Exhortations to you, as I have been wont to send before my Visitations ; and shall in This beseech you, and desire you to beseech others, to look upon this Tempest as a Loud Call to a speedy Repentance. Which every

ry one of us ought to Practise our selves, and Preach to our People, with great Earnestness, and pressing Persuasions; lest after so much Damage as we have suffered by this Stormy Wind, in the shattering our Churches and Houses, destroying our Shipping, and so many Seamen and others, a worse thing should come unto us.

I am the more excited to this, by the Remembrance of what I long ago read, when I was a Mem-

4 *An Exhortation to*

ber of the University, in a Learned and Holy Divine of our Church, the Famous Dr. Jackson. A little Volume of whose Sermons, which I still have by me, I met withal, Printed at Oxford in the Year 1637, (entituled, *Signs of the Times, or God's Forewarnings*) Preached partly before His Majesty, and partly at Newcastle upon Tyne; and may now be found in the Second Volume of his Works, p. 351.

In

In an *Appendix* to the last of which Sermons, he having mentioned a Treatise of his concerning *Ominous Prefagements*, or Abodings good or bad, ( which was never published ) he hath these memorable Words :  
*Among all the Forewarnings given to this Land, as so many Summons to Repentance, none which have been given in my Memory, did make so durable an Impression upon my Heart and Thoughts, as that late mighty Wind ; which having begun his Terrible Visi-*  
A 5 *tation*

6      *An Exhortation to*

*tation from the utmost Point of the South-west, did continue it in one Night unto the North-east Corner of this Southern Province. A Wind, as he describes it, much like that which lately raged, and blew from the same Point of the South-west, and in the same Month of November; though not on the same Day. For as that continued something longer, ( one whole Night, as I understand him ) so it fell out on the Eve of the Fifth of November, 1636. as ours did*

did on the *Twenty-sixth*, about Eleven-a-Clock at Night.

Now the very Time, as he thought, of that Visitation, was more than a Sign of the Time. *Tempus ipsum admonebat.* The very Time it self wherein it hapned, being the Vigils of that great Anniversary, *November V.* was a sign to his Apprehension most significant; and did interpret ( I transcribe his own Words ) the Meaning of this Terrible Messenger's In-



Inarticulate Voice, as well as any Prophet (if there had been any then alive) could have done.

And thus much of its Meaning, a serious Reader he thought might understand ; *That albeit we of these Kingdoms were in firm League with all the Nations of the Earth, with whom we have any Commerce ; although our greatest Enemies should become our greatest Friends ; yet it is still in the Lord Almighty his Power , and we may fear in his Purpose , to plague this*  
*King-*

Kingdom, by his own immediate Hand, &c. to bury more living Souls, as well of Superior as of Inferior Rank, in the Ruins of their Stately Houses, or meaner Cottages, than the Powder-Plotters did intend to do, or the Powder-Plot it self, had it taken effect, could have done.

This was the Admonition which he thought was given to this Kingdom at that time, by that Invisible, but most Audible Messenger (as he calls it.) Which I do not find that any one hath

hath taken notice of, upon occasion of the like Stormy Wind in November last; though it seems to me most worthy of great Consideration. For herein he was a kind of a Prophet; this being written but a Year before the Tumults in Scotland began; which were followed by those Commotions both in this Kingdom and that, which shaked the very Foundations of our Government, and overturned it; by Dethroning and Murdering our King, degrading

grading the Nobility, and enslaving the People to the Will of unreasonable Men; in one word, confounding all things both in Church and State.

I dare not take upon me to interpret the Language of the late Storm, so plainly as he did of that: For I am far from pretending to such a Divine Spirit, as seems to me to have been in that Holy Man: But I may declare my fear, that it bodes some further Calamities; if we do not amend  
our

12     *An Exhortation to*

our Lives, which bid an open Defiance to all God's Laws. And I may be allowed, nay, it is my Duty to Pray as he did upon that Occasion: God grant, saith he, every Member of this Church and Kingdom, Grace to look into his own Heart and Purposes; and to all in Authority, whether Superior or Inferior, from the highest to the lowest, to look not only unto their own, but unto others ways, of whom they have the Care or Oversight; that these may run parallel with the ways  
of

of God. Which if we shall continue to cross, or fall foul upon them, or his most sacred Laws, it is not any Parliamentary Law, or any Act of State, or Decrees of Courts of Justice, that can break the stroke of his out-stretched, punishing Arm and Hand; and fend off his dreadful Judgments threatened, from falling more heavy upon us, than at any time hitherto. (praised be his Name) they have done.

These solemn Reflections of his, upon the Voice of that Messenger of God  
( as

14     *An Exhortation to*

( as he stiles it ) have awakened me to consider, That I having the *Care and Oversight* of you, my Dear Brethren, ought, upon the like Occasion, to represent to you, that you are highly concerned in this matter: Being called by God to a *weighty Office and Charge*; that is, ( as you were told at your Ordination ) to be *Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord*; to teach, and to premonish, to feed and provide for the *Lord's Family*. And therefore, I  
be-



beseech you, look to the ways of your Parishioners; observe those who are negligent, or deviate from the ways of God; and admonish them of their Duty; exhort them to Repentance; giving them both *publick* and *private Monitions* (as you then promised to do) *with all faithful diligence.*

I shall mention some few things, wherein I desire your *Diligence*. If you observe any Persons to neglect the Publick Service of God on the Lord's Day, either  
loy-

loitering at Home carelessly, or prophanely frequenting Ill Houses; have a great Compassion upon these Men, and endeavour to awaken them out of their Stupidity: For if they be not Atheists, they are in the direct way to that horrid Impiety.

There are other solemn Times also appointed by Authority for Humiliation, to deprecate God's Displeasure, and avert his Judgments, which ought to be diligently attended. And though

though they are not continued Monthly, as they have sometimes been, yet no Authority (as that Great Man before-mention'd speaks upon occasion of the Storm in his days) prohibits any  
' private Man to fast upon  
' the Days appointed by  
' the Church. Whole Canons enjoin, though not  
' whole Families, yet of every Family some one or  
' other, to resort unto the  
' House of God, to offer up  
' Prayers and Supplications  
' appointed by our Church,  
' upon

18     *An Exhortation to*

‘ upon two other special  
‘ Days in the Week, besides  
‘ the Lord’s Day.

I know how hard it is to  
persuade Men to come and  
supplicate the Divine Mer-  
cy upon those we call *Lita-  
ny Days*: though it is a very  
easy Injunction, for some  
one out of every Family,  
to implore a Blessing upon  
the rest. Yet try, I beseech  
you, what you can do, to  
bring your People unto  
this, by representing to them  
the great Benefit of it. The  
late Dreadful Tempest,  
which

which put us all into a great  
Consternation, fell out, I  
observe, on a *Friday Night*.  
Now I cannot but think it  
was a great Comfort to e-  
very good Man, in the  
midst of that Fright, if he  
reflected that he, or some  
of his, had been at Church  
that Day, and commend-  
ed his Family to God; be-  
seeching him, as we pray  
in the *Litany*, to deliver us  
from *Lightning and Tempest*,  
as well as other Calamities  
there mentioned.

And

20 *An Exhortation to*

And further represent to them, that they who never pray to God from one Lord's-Day to another, but remain the whole Week without the Worship of God, are in very great danger of falling into such Forgetfulness of God, as is a large Step to Atheism. Therefore exhort them to have so much Care of their Souls, as at least to pray to God every Morning and Evening, in their own Family; begging his Blessing upon them in their several

Cal-

Callings; and rendring their humble Thanks to him for his Mercies. You can easily make such a Prayer for them, and beseech them to use it ; which would be a good step towards the making them Religious: But without this, very good Men have look'd upon it as a sign of Irreligion.

I lately met with these Words of a very Eminent Person, which I cannot well forbear to set down here ; *Constant Family Worship is so Necessary to keep*  
B *alive*



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*alive a constant Sense of God and Religion in the minds of Men, that I do not see how any Family that neglects it, can be esteemed a Family of Christians, or indeed to have any Religion at all : Inasmuch, that another late Writer quoting these Words, takes the confidence to say, A Prayerless Family is a Pagan Family.*

But I will say no more of this, but only one word, That the late Storm seems to call us to this Duty; that we should not content

our

our selves only on *Sundays* to beseech God, as we do in the Evening Service, *To defend us from the perils and dangers of that Night*; but every Night before we go to Rest, commend our selves to His Gracious Protection; for we know not, when we lye down, whether we shall rise again; but our Beds before the Morning may become our Graves.

It is incumbent also upon you, being the Lord's Watchmen, to observe

24 *An Exhortation to*

what Sins are most reigning in your Parish ; whether Drunkenness, Uncleaness, Swearing , Prophaning of the Lord's-Day , or any other ; and endeavour to Convince them of these Sins, and to bring them to Repentance ; exhorting all those who have any Power in their hands, to employ it with their utmost Vigor, for the suppressing of these Vices.

But I must more particularly admonish you of one thing, which you promised  
at

at your Ordination ; That you would *maintain and set forward, as much as in you lieth, Quietness, Peace and Love, among all Christian People, especially among those committed to your Charge.*

Now there was never greater need of your laborious Endeavours in this Business, than at this time ; if we may judge of all Places, by what we see in some ; where there are such Discords and Divisions, such Heats and Animosities, such Hatreds and Enmities, nay

such Study of Revenge, as, if they be not Extinguished, are sad Presages of an approaching Ruin. I cannot but think that the late Terrible Storm, which did so much Mischief by Land and by Sea, was a Warning to us; calling upon us to cease the violent Storms of Contention that are among us, which endanger the Shipwrecking of the whole Kingdom.

Her most Excellent Majesty lately recommended this to the whole Body of  
the

the Nation assembled in Parliament by their Representatives, which She did in an extraordinary Vehemence of Stile; telling us, That She *wanted Words* to Express Her earnest Desire of *seeing all Her Subjects in perfect Peace and Union among themselves*; and therefore desires us all carefully to avoid any Heats or Divisions that may disappoint Her of that Satisfaction, and give Encouragement to the common Enemies of our Church and State. But alas! our Dis-

ferences and Quarrels still continue; and we are in nothing so Zealous, as in our fierce Oppositions one to another.

It is sad to consider the lamentable Effects of this, which already appears in the most unaccountable Disaffection Men bear to one another, in the Writings and Reproaches that are cast on those who have been and are the great Supporters of Religion among us. What a strange Liberty do Men tolerate in themselves,



selves, who represent these Persons as the Betrayers of the Church, meerly because they do not agree with them in some Notions; that is, do not take those things to be for the Service of the Church, which they judge very Necessary? May not Men differ in such things, and not fall out one with another? What Reason can be given for such a License as Men take to Censure their Superiors in this manner, who have all their Lives, in all times, in all

dangers, closely adhered to the Interest of the Church, and taken a great deal of Pains in their Pious Labours to promote it? Might not a little Modesty teach Men to think, that they who are Above, see a little more than they who are Below? If this Virtue were not very scarce, men would not be so fierce and forward to Censure and Judge, without Restraint, their *Elders*, who are men of longer Observation and Experience than themselves.

May

May we not think that  
God sent this rough Mes-  
senger ( I mean the late  
Furious Tempest ) to re-  
prove the violent, boiste-  
rous Spirit which rages a-  
mong us, and teach us  
more Moderation, Gentle-  
ness, and Goodness ?  
Which that we may learn,  
Her Majesty hath been  
pleased most Piously once  
more to recommend it un-  
to us, in the Conclusion of  
the Session of Parliament  
Yesterday: When She told  
us, “ That though Her  
“ De-

32     *An Exhortation to*

“ Desires which She had ex-  
“ pressed in the beginning  
“ of it , of seeing us in  
“ perfect Unity, had not  
“ met with all the Success  
“ which She Wish’d and  
“ Expected; yet being ful-  
“ ly convinced that nothing  
“ is so necessary to our  
“ common Welfare ; She  
“ is not discouraged from  
“ persisting in the same ear-  
“ nest Desires, That all  
“ will go down into their  
“ several Countries, so dis-  
“ posed to Moderation and  
“ Unity, as becomes those  
“ who

“ *who are joyned together in*  
“ *the same Religion and In-*  
“ *terest.*

By this we cannot but see,  
that as She said at first, Her  
Royal Heart is set on this :  
And let ours be so too ; let  
nothing discourage us from  
the Blessed Work of Peace-  
makers ; remembering that  
whatsoever Character Men  
give us, our Lord hath  
Pronounced such to be the  
*Children of God.*

All these things are very  
plain, and have been often  
said, but without their de-  
fired

34 *An Exhortation to*

fired Effect; the Reason of which, it is worth our Pains to search into. For which Cause I have annexed to this short Exhortation, a Sermon I preached a little after the late amazing Storm, in my own Chapel; wherein I endeavoured to show how it comes to pass, that so many Judgments as have befallen us, have not amended us. There are too many, I have there observed, that mind not the Hand of God in them, but impute all such things

things to Natural Causes,  
tho' they know not what.

This Temper of Mind  
renders Men hopeless, un-  
less they be awaken'd before  
they are settled in it, to have  
a greater Regard to *the*  
*Works of the Lord, and the*  
*Operations of His Hands.*  
For they that are not moved  
by such Astonishing Judg-  
ments as the late Storm, to  
think of God, are more  
stupid and dull than the un-  
reasonable Creatures, such  
as the Birds of the Air;  
with which *Jeremiah* up-  
braids



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braids the *Israelites*, in not discerning, or not observing, those Signs of the Time, which foreshewed God's Judgments coming upon them; with the Causes that Provoked them, 8. *Jerem.* 6, 7. *I hearkned and heard, but they spake not aright; no man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turneth to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battel. Yea, the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow*  
low

*low observe the time of their coming, but my people know not the judgment of the L O R D.*

Upon which Words that great Man before-mentioned, *Dr. Jackson*, thus discourses; and it deserves our serious Attention and Consideration. *This Stupidity or Senselessness in man, whether Jew or Gentile, whether Christian or Heathen, in thus slighting or neglecting the Signs of the Time, that is, such Portendments or Prognosticks of Gods Judgments or Calamities, as the very Book of nature, or of the visible Creatures affords;*

38 *An Exhortation to*

*affords ; argues the Nature, at least the Disposition of Men in whom this Stupidity is found, to be farther out of Frame, than the Nature of the Birds of the Air, or Beasts of the Field ; for they commonly foresee unseasonable Weather, or Storm coming, and seek in time for some shelter or refuge : But so do not Men for the most part return to God, who is their only refuge, under the shadow of whose Wings there is only hope of Safety ; albeit He daily gives them more pregnant Progno-  
sticks*

*sticks of Wrath ensuing, than the disposition of the Air doth unto Birds or Fowls.*

I hope what I have said, and what follows in the ensuing Discourse, may have such an effect on those that seriously consider it, as to preserve them from such a senseless Temper of Mind; which if it should generally prevail, I know not what will become of us; but shall be apt to say with David, *My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments.*

April 4. 1704.

XVI.

XVI. Rev. 9. Latter Part.

*And they repented not, to give  
him Glory.*

**W**Hen we see brute  
Creatures so Sen-  
sible, as to beware of those  
things whereby they have  
lately sorely Suffered ; it  
may justly raise our Won-  
der, that Mankind should  
be so Stupid, as when they  
have done very Foolishly,  
and

and thereby Ruined themselves, not to alter their Course, and by Repenting of their Folly *give Glory* to God, and take Shame to themselves.

It is something strange, that any Man who owns a God, should adventure to Affront His Authority, by opposing himself to His declared Will : But not to Repent of the Fault when he hath committed it, is far more unaccountable : But it is little less than astonishing, that after Men  
have

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have smarted soundly for it (which was the Case of the Men here spoken of ) and been severely Corrected many ways , and a long time, upon that Account, it should not lead them to Repentance.

What! not Repent after God had not only sent His Son to call them to it ; and His Son had sent the Holy Ghost to give them the Grace of Repentance ; and He had denounced terrible Threatnings if they resisted this Grace, which is represented

sented in the Second Chapter of this Book, by a *Sword*, nay a *Two-edged Sword* going out of his mouth against all Contumacious Sinners: But when He had began also a great while ago, to take this Sword into His Hand, to fulfil His Threatnings, and to do Execution; nay, when He had made great Slaughter, and His Sword was become Drunk with the Blood of the Slain: What an Obstinacy was this? How hard and rough were these Men's Hearts? With what



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what a mad Resolution  
were they possessed , that  
nothing would satisfy them  
but to be utterly Undone ?

Was there ever any such  
Men in the World be-  
fore ? Or are there any now  
so Inconsiderate , who so  
little understand their own  
Interest , that they can be  
moved neither by Words  
nor by Blows , to cease their  
Folly , and turn to God ? O  
that we could say there are  
none now who tread in the  
steps of these desperate Sin-  
ners ! That it were as cer-  
tain

tain the men in my Text had no Successors in their Impiety, as it is certain they did but follow some Ancient Precedents, who had led them the way to Destruction.

You may read in the 4th of *Amos*, a most sad Complaint which God made by that Prophet, of His People *Israel*, that tho' He had sent one Judgment after another upon them, yet they returned not unto Him. *I have given you want of bread in all your places,*

C

ces,

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*ces, yet ye have not returned unto me, saith the LORD: I have withholden the rain from you, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD: I have smitten you with blasting and mildew, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. And so He proceeds to mention other Judgments; five times repeating this as the Burden of his Complaint, Yet have ye not returned unto me. Read at your leisure from v. 6. to v. 12. of that Chapter.*

Now

Now the very same Obstinacy which possessed those obdurate *Israelites*, was found here again in the Hearts of these Apostate Christians; who after *four Vials* of the Wrath of God had been poured out upon them, yet *repented not*, to give him *Glory*: Nay, after a Fifth Shower of Divine Vengeance was fallen upon their Heads, yet it is said again, *v. 11.* That they only *blasphemed the God of heaven*, because of their Pains and their Sores,

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*and repented not of their deeds.*

I wish I could here make a full stop, and proceed no further in this sad History of an unrelenting Spirit : That I could say there have been none besides these, so obstinately bent upon their own Ruin, as not to Repent of their Deeds, after God hath sent many terrible Judgments upon them, one on the neck of another, to awaken them to it.

But hath there not been more than a spice of this Disease among us, in this Nation;

Nation ; who after Twenty Years of Tumult and Confusion , of War and Bloodshed ( wherein we lost a most Religious King, with our Ancient Government in Church and State ) *did not repent, to give glory unto God?* No, nor after a devouring Pestilence, which soon followed the Happy Restoration ; nor after a no less devouring Fire ; nor after the Plague of Popery, which began to break out among us, till God mercifully stopt its Progress by

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our late Wonderful Deliverance. Yet we cannot say that these and other Judgments (which I forbear to mention) have wrought any great Alteration in us ; but the same Spirit still possesses us, of Impiety towards God, and Hatred one towards another.

It will well become every Minister of the Gospel, to enquire and find out the Cause of such Impenitence ; that no Perswasions , no Threatnings, no, nor Judgments, nor the most dreadful Executions ( of which  
St.

St. *John* here speaks ) can move those that feel them, and groan under the Burden of them, to Repent of their evil Deeds. And that shall be my Business in the following Discourse; to the end, that by finding out the Causes, we may be directed how to remove the Effects.

Now this stubborn Impenitence may be ascribed to such Causes as these :

I.

First, Some Sinners are apt to impute all the Calamities that fall upon them,



and others, to bring them to Repentance, unto mere Chance, and blind Fortune : Their Thoughts are so slight, that they think nothing else is concerned in them. When noisome and grievous Diseases sweep Multitudes away ( as it was the Case mentioned in the Second Verse of this Chapter); when the Fruits of the Earth are Blasted ; when such a furious Tempest rages, as lately did so much Damage both at Land and Sea, they call it an Accident,

dent, and never mind the Hand of God therein.

Now how should they Repent, and return to him, when they do not know who it is that smites them? When *God is not in all their thoughts* ( as the *Psalmist* speaks ), What hope is there that they should humble themselves, and submit to his Corrections?

This, it is certain, was the Cause of their Ruin whom *Amos* speaks of; whose Condition was parallel to theirs in my Text; as may

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be gathered from the *Third*  
Chapter of his Prophecy ,  
*v. 6. Shall a trumpet be blown*  
*in the City, and the People not*  
*be afraid? Shall there be evil*  
*in a city, and the LORD*  
*hath not done it ?* As much  
as if he had said, Do not  
People use to rise and run to  
their Arms, when they hear  
the Trumpet sound? Yes  
sure, though they be in  
their warm Beds, and hea-  
vy with Sleep; unless they  
think it a false Alarm, and  
imagine that some Idle Per-  
son doth but play the wan-  
ton

ton with them. And is there not the same reason, that you should be Rouzed by the Calamities that befall you? Why should not you be stirred up thereby to look about you, and endeavour to prevent the Danger which threatens you? unless you think that there is nothing in all these Calamities, but a concurrence of Accidents, which fortuitously (*i. e.* by Chance) meet together to disturb and disquiet you. But know, that *there is no evil in your city,*

*ty, but the L O R D hath a hand in it. Be not so sottish as to fancy, that He doth not interest Himself in all that befalls you. Look upon them as Divine Admonitions; as Warning-Pieces shot from Heaven, to awaken your drowzy Souls to Repent, and keep off further Danger.*

*Thus the Prophet Micah speaks to the People of Judah, as Amos had done unto those of Israel, 6. Micah 9. The L O R D's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wis-*

*wisdom shall see thy name ;  
hear ye the rod, and who hath  
appointed it.* It is the LORD  
of Heaven and Earth that  
calls aloud to you by these  
Judgments ; and if there be  
any man among you that  
hath not lost his Reason  
and Discretion, he will *see*  
*God's Name*, that is, His  
Power, Justice, and Truth,  
in these things, whereby He  
rebukes men for their Ini-  
quity : Therefore hearken  
to the *voice of the rod* ; mind  
and consider what it saith,  
and think that God Himself  
speaks.

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speaks to you by its Mouth.

And what doth the Rod of God say, when at any time you feel its strokes?

The Prophet there tells us, in the very next Words;

*Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? v. 10.*

And so he goes on to relate what Violence was in their hands, what Fraud in their dealings, how they spake Lies, and their Tongues were deceitful in their Mouths; that is, the Rod  
of

of God accused them of those Sins, which then reigned most among them; and called upon them to Repent of them. And as it concerned them very highly in those days, so it doth us now in such Cases, to show our selves *Men of Wisdom*; and not to be so Foolish, as to impute all the Evil that befalls us, to mere Chance; lest the Divine Vengeance proceed to such an Extremity as there follows, v. 13. *Therefore will I make thee sick in smiting thee,*



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thee, in making thee desolate  
because of thy sins.*

That's the usual Effect of  
Atheism and Irreligion ,  
when Men will not be cu-  
red of it, that they be ex-  
tirpated and rooted out of  
the Earth, and their Coun-  
try be laid desolate: It not be-  
ing fit that they should live,  
who will not acknowledge  
the God of their Life.

This is one great Cause  
why there is no Amend-  
ment, no, not by the Seve-  
rest Judgments. Men are  
void of a Sense of God ,  
which

which is the beginning of  
all Religion and Goodness.

II.

Another Cause why  
Men do not Repent when  
they are Punished so severely  
for their Sins, as the men  
whom *St. John* here speaks of,  
were ; is this, That many  
who have some Sense of  
God, have such a good  
Opinion of themselves,  
that they look upon these  
Punishments that are In-  
flicted on a Nation, as the  
desert of other men's Sins,  
and not of their own.

There

There are those who acknowledge the Hand of God in all common Calamities, who yet imagine they see that Hand stretched out against another sort of Men, and not against themselves.

There is scarce any Country or Place, but it is divided into several Parties and Factions: All great Cities are Inhabited by Men of different Opinions and Perswasions, in something or other; and each think the way wherein the  
other

other is, to be Absurd and Dangerous. Now when any Mischief befalls that Place, every Party is wont to impute it to the others Fault ; and though they all Suffer in it , throw the Guilt off from themselves, and lay it upon other Men's Backs. Every one is forward and glad to absolve himself , and transfers the Deferts of his own Sins to another man's Crimes.

Now this Humour ,  
when it prevails ( and it is  
com-

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commonly one of the lamentable Effects of all Divisions ) unavoidably hinders Men's return to God. For whilst all cast the blame from off themselves, they must needs continue as they were before : While every one thinks another bad , there is nobody grows Better ; When they expect their Neighbours should Amend, they do not amend themselves. It is you that have drawn this Ruin upon us, says one Sort of Men ; Nay, it is You, replies the other :  
And

And so, while they toss the Guilt (as I may speak) from one side to the other, it remains among them all.

If you would not have your Hearts hardned in Sin, every Man must suspect himself, and endeavour to find out his own Iniquity. He must not entertain such an Opinion of his own Innocence, and other Men's Lewdness, as to imagine the Guilt is not divided between them. But as the Prophet *Zachary* saith, Every Family or Tribe a-  
part

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part should be forced to Bewail and Mourn for their Afflictions ( 12. 11. &c. ) So truly we ought to do for our Sins : Every Man, every Family, of whatsoever Perswasion they be, ought to ask themselves, What have we done ? For more or less; all have Offended God.

Till there be this Sobriety, this Humility, this Holy Jealousy over our selves; this Impartiality and upright Judgment, there is no hope     Men     should be  
brought

brought to Repentance ;  
but every one will rush forward in his Evil Courses, like the Horse into the Battel ; fearing no Danger, and seeing no Fault at all, that should make him distrust himself in the Course wherein he is engaged.

III.

I may add unto this, as being nearly linked to it, that the Hatred which men of different Perswasions usually bear to each other, is another Cause they do not Return to God. Because  
they



they are vehemently bent in other Designs against Men. They are so full of Thoughts how to make a strong Opposition to them, that they consider nothing else; no, not the common Ruin that is likely to come upon them all. Their Hearts are so entirely possessed with earnest desires to Supplant each other, that there is no room for other Thoughts; especially when they imagine, that by such Contrivances they are doing God good Service. This blinds

blinds their Eyes, so that they can see no Fault in themselves, nor no Good in others: Nay, this mutual Hatred which they have conceived, makes them oft-times look upon the Evils which befall them, as coming from Men, and not from God; and so they are tempted to seek rather to be Revenged of them, than to be Reconciled to Him.

Thus, it is likely, it was with *Samaria*, against whom *Amos* Prophesied; who  
D Wor-

Worshipped God upon another Mountain, different from that at *Jerusalem*; nay, opposite unto it: and so all their Care was to keep at as great a distance as they could from *Judah*; though they still remained at a wider distance from God. The very thing, I fear, that hath undone many in these days, who have no greater Concern, than to destroy those that are Opposite to them. Their Hearts are so fraught with a bitter Zeal this way, that they

they have no regard to any thing else. Their Sins lye quiet and safe, and are not at all opposed; while they are furiously engaged in these Enmities: Nay, all God's Judgments, which are intended to allay these Heats, serve only to inflame their Spirits in these Inveterate Hatreds.

For they imagine, as I said, those whom they oppose, to be the Causes or the Instruments of all those Evils that befall them; and so they employ their

D 2 Thoughts,

Thoughts, and their Desires, and their Tongues too against them, and not against the true Cause of all their Sins and Iniquities, which escape without any Censure. Their Minds are quite drawn from the Consideration how they Provoke God, by the continual Provocation they receive one from another. They cannot return to Him, because they have turned all their Thoughts and Cares another way, from whence they will not be diverted. So

So dangerous a thing it is, to have our Hearts fraught with Hatred, as they too commonly are, when Men are engaged in opposite Factions: Which is not only very Wicked in it self, being directly contrary to the Christian Spirit, the very Bane of Religion, nay, and of Human Society; but (besides other mischievous Consequences) it obstructs Men's Repentance, and hardens them in their Sins; which are not Observed, or not Cor-

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directed, while they are violently bent to Prosecue other Men, whom they think more Faulty than themselves.

Of this Disease therefore we must seek a Cure, by such serious Thoughts as these : That nothing is so Odious, as Sin and Wickedness; and above all other Sins, this of Hatred and Malignity, bitter Strife and Debate, especially upon the score of Religion; and these, or any other Sins are least to be endured in  
our

our selves, if we be guilty of them: And if we are Guilty of them, but do not see them, or are not Sensible of them, we are unfit Judges of the Faults of other Men. But if Men do see them, and will not in the first study to Amend themselves, how can they reasonably hope that others should Amend their Faults? Or with what Face can they accuse their Neighbours, when they lie under the same Guilt which they charge on them? And



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have not such Power over others, as they have over their own Hearts and Ways; and therefore must begin to Reform at home. Which if we would do, we have this comfortable Assurance from the Wise Man, That *when a man's ways please the Lord, he will make even his enemies to be at peace with him,* 16. Prov. 7.

In the Verse before which Words, there is this Remark made by the same Wise Man, That *by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.*

evil. From whence I might  
take occasion to observe,  
That on the contrary, Men  
do not depart from Evil;  
because instead of cherishing  
an Holy Fear in their  
Hearts, they sooth them-  
selves up with vain Hopes.  
This I might alledge as  
another Cause that Men do  
not Repent, even when  
they feel the Hand of God  
Scourging them for their  
Sins: They flatter them-  
selves very easily, with a  
belief of better Times,  
though they do not grow

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better themselves. When a Judgment is removed, they hope the like will not return again. And the more Merciful God is, in not letting it lie long (which by the way hath been our own Case,) the more Confident Men grow that they are out of all Danger. But if I should enlarge on this, I should not leave room for that which I take to be more Material.

IV.

The next thing there-  
fore

fore, to which , I think ,  
Men's Impenitence may  
be justly ascribed ; is, That  
they are apt to think God's  
Mind may be altered and  
turned towards them by  
some means or other, tho'  
they do not turn to Him.  
They may Appease Him  
they fancy, and keep off  
utter Desolation , without  
a thorough Reformation.  
Their Solemn Prayers, for  
instance, and Supplications,  
especially if joined with  
Fasting, and sorrowful Hu-  
miliation of themselves ,  
will

will move Him, they think, to lay aside His Anger, though it be ever so great.

And indeed these are such prevalent Things, that I wish Men were generally more Serious, and frequent in the Practice of them: For they suppose we are sensible of our Sin, and of our Danger: And consequently that we are willing to do any thing to obtain a Pardon for the one, and a Removal of the other. They that are truly Humbled, are ready to sub-

submit to any terms, and consent to every thing that is proposed to them. But if we rest here, and go no further; if we have only some good Desires, Inclinations, and Purposes; and then fall into this Opinion, That God may be importuned hereby to be Merciful to us, without any further care to procure His Favour; this is such a Conceit, that where it prevails, there is no reason to expect a change of Men's Life and Manners.

This

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This was it undid the Jews, and brought them to utter Ruin. For when their Country was already Desolate, when their Cities were burnt with Fire ( as we read in 1. *Isaiah* 7. ) then they thought to appease the Divine Majesty with a Multitude of Sacrifices ; with the Fat of fed Beasts ; with their Oblations and Incense ; their new Moons, and Solemn Assemblies : Though they did not put away the Evil of their Doings from before



fore His Eyes; as we read there, v. 11, 12, 13. and those that follow. Where he protests that all these things were an Abomination; that He loathed and abhorred those Services, though of His Own Institution; that He was weary to bear them; that they rather more Provoked than Atoned Him by these Means.

And therefore He threatens to *hide his eyes from them when they spread forth their hands to him; yea, when they*  
*made*



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made many prayers, he would  
 not hear them: The Reason  
 follows, v. 15. Your hands  
 are full of blood. They did  
 not lift up pure hands unto  
 him (as the Apostle Ex-  
 horts,) and therefore, to  
 put them in the right way,  
 he calls upon them, v. 16,  
 v. 17. Wash you, make you  
 clean, put away the evil of  
 your doings from before mine  
 eyes; cease to do evil, learn  
 to do well; seek judgment;  
 relieve the oppressed; judge  
 the fatherless; plead the  
 cause of the widow. And  
 then

then adds, 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wooll. As much as to say, Now the Business is done, now we are Agreed, but not till now. This is the thing that will turn away my Wrath: not Prayers alone, though ever so Earnest; not Sacrifices, though ever so Rich; not Solemn Days for Divine Service, though strictly Ob-

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Observed ; which are only the Means, not the End ; and therefore we must not rest in them, till they bring us to that for which they are designed, the making us truly better. Which we shall never be, till we settle this belief in our Mind, That it is impossible to prevail with God to cease his Anger, till we cease to do evil, and learn to do well ; that is, till we cease to provoke him to Anger.

This is the Doctrine of  
that

that Prophet; and the very same the Prophet *Amos* preached to the *Israelites*, which he did to the *Jews*, v. 21, 22, &c. *I hate and despise your feast-days, and I will not smell (or relish) your holy assemblies; though you offer me burnt offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take away from me the noise of thy songs, or Hymns, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment come down as waters, and righteousness*

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*ness as a mighty Stream.*  
Till we learn such Lessons as  
this, and not trust merely  
to our Prayers and Solemn  
Days, we are in a ready  
way to Destruction: Be-  
cause these we would have  
God to accept, instead of  
Repentance and Amend-  
ment of Life; when without  
this, he declares, He is so far  
from Accepting the other,  
that he will have no regard  
to them; nay, despises and  
hates them.

There is a Solemn time  
now approaching (which  
we

we call *LENT*) of Fa-  
sting and Humiliation; in  
which many of us, I hope,  
will make a Conscience of  
performing some of the  
Duties belonging to it;  
that is, Spend some time  
more than ordinary in  
Prayer, in Reading, in cal-  
ling our selves to an Ac-  
count, and reflecting on  
our former Life: Using  
likewise some kind of Ab-  
stinence, if not Fasting,  
as we find it most Profitable.  
But let us not, I beseech  
you, content our selves  
with

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with the bare External Performance of these things; which will very much increase our Guilt, if they breed in us such a mean Opinion of God, that we imagine, He can be pleased with these outward Exercises alone; though there follow no inward change of our Hearts, nor any Reformation of Life; which He expects should be wrought by such means; because for that end they were Ordained. Fasting, for instance, is an excellent  
Re-



Remedy for many Sins; but then it must cure them, or else it is good for little.

Shall I desire you to hear part of a Discourse of *St. Chrysostom* upon this Subject, in his Third Sermon to the People of *Antioch*. He that defines  
' Fasting, by mere Absti-  
' nence from Food, he it is  
' that dishonours Fasting.  
' For it is not mere Ab-  
' stinence from Food, but  
' departing from Evil. Dost  
' thou Fast? Show it by  
' thy Works. If thou  
' askest, what Works? I an-  
' swer,



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‘swer, If thou seest a poor  
‘Man, Relieve him ; if  
‘thou meetest an Enemy,  
‘be Reconciled to him ; if  
‘thou seest a Neighbour in  
‘greater Prosperity than  
‘thy self, do not Envy him.  
‘Let not thy Stomach on-  
‘ly Fast, but thy Eyes,  
‘thy Ears, thy Feet, thy  
‘Hands, and all the rest  
‘of the Members of thy  
‘Body. Let thy Hands  
‘abstain from Extortion,  
‘Rapine, Covetousness,  
‘and Violence ; Let thy  
‘Feet keep a Fast, by stop-  
‘ping

‘ping their Course to un-  
‘lawful Spectacles. Let  
‘thy Eyes abstain from  
‘wanton Glances. Let thy  
‘Ears keep a Fast, by not  
‘listening to Detraction,  
‘Calumnies, Accusations,  
‘but turning away from  
‘those that Whisper them.  
‘Let the Mouth also Fast,  
‘from filthy Communica-  
‘tion, from Reproaches,  
‘from Reviling, from Rail-  
‘ing, Evil Speaking, Ly-  
‘ing and Slandering.

‘For what good doth it  
‘to abstain from eating  
E ‘Flesh

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‘ Flesh, or from Fish ei-  
 ‘ ther, if we bite and de-  
 ‘ vour one another? Now  
 ‘ he that Detracts, he that  
 ‘ Backbites another, he eats  
 ‘ his Brothers Flesh, he  
 ‘ bites his Neighbour. From  
 ‘ which St. Paul terrifies us,  
 ‘ when he saith, 5. Galat.  
 ‘ 15. *If ye bite and devour*  
 ‘ *one another, take heed that*  
 ‘ *ye be not consumed one of*  
 ‘ *another.* Thou hast not  
 ‘ fastned thy Teeth in a bit  
 ‘ of Flesh all this Lent; but  
 ‘ thou hast fastned a false  
 ‘ Accusation, an evil Sur-  
 ‘ mise

‘ mise, an unjust Suspicion,  
‘ an ungrounded Jealousy,  
‘ in the Soul of another;  
‘ whereby thou hast woun-  
‘ ded that Soul, and those  
‘ whom thou hast falsely  
‘ Accused, and affected thy  
‘ self with innumerable  
‘ Evils. Which he there  
‘ reckons up, but I shall  
‘ not mention; because it  
‘ is time to tell you how he  
‘ concludes in these Words:

‘ Though we should eat  
‘ Ashes, such Severity will  
‘ do us no Service; unless  
‘ we abstain from Detracti-

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‘ on. For not those things  
 ‘ that enter into the Mouth  
 ‘ defile the Man , *but those*  
 ‘ *things that proceed out of*  
 ‘ *the mouth, come forth from*  
 ‘ *the heart, and they defile the*  
 ‘ *man. For out of the heart*  
 ‘ *proceed evil thoughts (i. e.*  
 ‘ *Designs ) murder, adulter-*  
 ‘ *ry, fornication, theft, false-*  
 ‘ *witness, blasphemies. These*  
 ‘ *are the things which defile*  
 ‘ *the man, 15. Matt. 18, &c.*  
 And then he beseeches them,  
 not to think it enough that  
 they have been Serious for  
 a few Days, but to look  
 upon

upon themselves as bound to Reform their Life, if they expected to be Happy. For as they who are very Sick, unless they alter their way of living, will receive no Benefit by the strictness of their Diet for a little time: So unless Sinners, saith he, will be always sober, two or three days of Fasting will do them no good.

V.

And so I proceed to the last thing I shall mention, as the Cause of Men's not

E 3

Re-

Repenting; no, not though they be loudly awakened to it by Terrible Judgments; Which is the slightness of their Thoughts; the want of serious Consideration, which makes God's Word, and all His Works prove ineffectual. We can alledge no other Cause of what I just now said, that they make some part of their Duty, and the least part, serve for the whole. Of which they could not be Guilty, did they consider, either the  
Na-

Nature of God, or the Nature of Sin, or the Nature of those Duties which they are willing to Perform; or indeed any thing else that belongs to Religion.

I have not room to enlarge upon all these, and therefore shall particularly confine my self to that which the Text principally relates unto, The Divine Judgments; which ought above all Things to awaken us to Consideration; without which they leave no deep Impression upon



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us. Of the Necessity of this, the Wise Man admonishes us, in that grave Counsel which he gives, 8. *Eccles.* 14. *In the day of adversity consider.* Consider what you have done ; Consider what God would have you to do ; Consider the Reason why you should do it ; Consider your Danger if you do it not ; Yea, consider what it is that is wont to keep you from Consideration.

One thing I am sure is,  
The Love of the Bodily  
Life ;

Life ; the desire of Fleshly Ease and Delights. These are unwilling that a Man should grow Serious. They are all spoiled if he become Considerate. They tempt him to throw away all Thoughts, that so he may enjoy himself more sweetly, and not be disturbed in his Pleasures.

Let us beware therefore of these Enchantments. Let us take heed we be not lulled asleep in the Lap of Sensual Enjoyments ; for fear our Ruin fall upon us,

E 5            when

when we are not aware of it.

Above all, in time of great Distress by any publick or private Calamity, we ought to shun Voluptuousness, as we do Shelves and Quicksands; which Men more especially dread in a Storm. Then it is most unseasonable to make our selves Merry, when we are in great Danger. For that's the way to throw off all Consideration; even then when to Consider is most necessary, and will do

do us the greatest Service. It is a sign Men are void of all Sense, and have no more Fear than the Brutes; which Eat and Drink just as they use to do, when they see one of their Fellows Slaughtered before their Eyes. Read what the Prophet *Isaiab* writes about this matter, in 22. Chap. v. 12, 13, 14. In that day did the LORD God of hosts call to weeping, and mourning, to baldness and girding with sackcloth. And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing

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*killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine. Let us eat and drink for to morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine ears, by the LORD of hosts, surely, this iniquity shall not be purged from you till you die, saith the LORD God of hosts. Purged from them? no, how was it possible, when they themselves opposed the means of their Cure? God called for Mourning; and they quite contrary, betook themselves to Merriment and Pleasure. They were like unto some Sick Persons, who at that very time, when they are under the Physicians hands, will not forbear their Intemperance or bad Diet, which was the cause of their Disease. Doth any Man expect his Medicines will*

will work the Effect he desires, when he to whom they are Administred will not refrain from full Meals, or from his Mushrooms and unwholsome Diet? He may pray his Heart out, who begs Health of God, while he does nothing but disorder himself, even while he is confined to his Chamber for his Recovery. And just so unsuccessful will all those Supplications prove, which are made to God for the saving of our Souls, or of our Country from Ruin; while we continue to oppose his Divine Methods, from whom all Salvation comes.

For it is altogether like to a Man that calls for Quarter, and begs Mercy of his Enemy that hath him in his Power; though  
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at the same time he deals his Blows round about him as thick as ever, and shows no sign that he abates his Hostility. Such Supplications are perfectly ridiculous : They carry in themselves their own denial ; they forbid that which they ask, and undermine the very foundation of the Request.

If then we would not be numbred with those Stubborn Rebels, who gave the occasion of this Discourse, and after many Vials of God's Wrath poured on them, *repented not, to give him glory* : If you would not be like the old *Samaritans* whom *Amos* speaks of, nor hear those Sighs so often repeated of you, as they were of them, *Yet ye returned not unto me, saith the*  
the

*the LORD: Yet ye returned not unto me, &c.* Do not rely upon your Prayers alone, or the most passionate Beseechings you can use, for Mercy from God; but joyn therewith sober and considering Thoughts; especially when He calls you to them in any kind of Trouble. *In the day of adversity consider.*

Consider among other things, what I have now represented to you. Consider the Causes of the hardness of Men's Hearts; and then if you have any Fear of the Divine Majesty, and of His Judgments, how can you chuse but return to him?

Think that it is God who calls upon you to Repent, by every Affliction that befalls you.  
Think



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Think that he bids you search and try your own Ways, and leave others to examine theirs.

Think that you are not so much concerned to persuade others to be of your Mind, as to persuade your self to be of God's.

Set your selves against Men's notorious Vices, more than against them.

Be not secure, nor flatter up your selves with vain Hopes.

Believe that the Prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD.

Do not imagine you should employ your time to move him; but to move your selves to change your Will.

Consider that He is always the same; and that it is we who must alter and turn, not He.

That

That **He** is ever an Enemy to the Bad , and a Friend to the Good ; and that nothing can alter this eternal Reason and Law. That we do but spend our Breath in vain, if we seek to incline him unto us , without more than an inclination unto him ; that is, without actual Amendment of our wicked Life.

In Conclusion , believe that the greatest Bane of all good Thoughts and Desires, is a Voluptuous Life. This extinguishes all the Sparks of Grace that are in Men's Souls ; it choaks and stifles all Virtuous Motions : and therefore let us avoid it, as we would Everlasting Damnation.

Consider these things frequent-

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quently ; and consider withal how by taking this Course, you will Glorify God : For *St. John* here supposes, That *to repent, is to give him Glory.*

*APPLICATION.*

**W**ould you not, before you leave this World, do some Honour unto Him who brought you hither? Repent then ; alter the Course of your Life ; for that is an effectual Acknowledgment of God, in all the Perfections belonging to His Divine Nature : which the Scripture means by *giving him glory.*

By this we humbly acknowledge the Authority he hath over us ; and confess His Right to give us Laws, whereby we ought

*the Clergy of Ely.* 111

ought to be ruled and governed.

These Laws also we acknowledge to be Equal, Just, and Good; when forsaking all other ways, we return to their Obedience.

Whereby we acknowledge also His Wisdom; that we are in the Wrong, and He in the Right; that we have played the Fool, and followed after Lies; and He alone can make us Wise unto Salvation.

The Truth also of His Threatnings is acknowledged by Repentance, which gives Him the Glory of His Veracity in what He hath Denounced against Sinners.

And so it doth also Glorify His Power, which conquers Souls, and subdues Hearts, and  
turns

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turns about Men's obstinate Wills, and carries them Captive to the Obedience of Faith.

For Repentance is a yielding the Victory to God, who hath long strove with us. It is a throwing down our Arms, and professing our selves overcome by the force of His Conviction, by the Strength of His Truth, by the Mightiness of His Love, and by the Power of His Holy Spirit.

What need I speak of the Honour it doth to His Holiness? It being an open Declaration, That He cannot be in Love with Sin; nor by any means be Reconciled to it, though His Love be ever so great unto us.

His Unchangeableness is likewise hereby acknowledged:  
That

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That we must Turn and become like unto Him ; but He cannot Turn and become like unto us.

I omit the rest, and only put you in mind how hereby we acknowledge, That He is the Fountain of true Bliss: That the Felicity of our Souls lies in His Favour and Love: That after we have tired our selves with a fond long pursuit of Happiness in other things, we can find no rest to our Souls but in Him alone; whose Will is the Rule of Righteousness: Whose Nature it is to be Happy.

We flee therefore to Him by Repentance, as the only Comfort of reasonable Beings; as the Rest and Repose of Human Souls; as the solid and immortal Joy of our Minds; in Conjunction

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junction with whom we cannot but be Happy ; and in Separation from whom, we must needs be inconceivably Miserable.

If all these be too much to Remember, keep in Mind only the First and the Last of them ; and you will be sufficiently satisfied of the Glory you give to God by Repentance. For it is an acknowledgment of Him to be both our Sovereign Lord, and our Sovereign Good ; our Ruler, and our Rewarder ; as having Supreme Authority, and Supreme Felicity : Or in the Apostle's Language, *The blessed and one Potentate, who only hath immortality.*

We disclaim hereby all other Governors ; and we protest we have no other Good. We resign



sign our selves to His Holy Will and Pleasure ; and profess that our highest Pleasure and Contentment is in pleasing Him ; in Loving Him ; and hoping He will be well pleased with us, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Who hath told us, *That there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.* This he repeats twice in the same place, 15. *Luk. 7, 10.* Which cannot but suggest to our Thoughts, what an exceeding great Joy there would be in the Presence of God, if a whole Nation did Repent, or if the generality of Men among us did grow better.

This God expects should be the fruit of his Blessed Gospel, which we have long enjoy'd ; and the fruit of his many severe  
Chastise-